

## The Use of TikTok Social Media on Students' Self-Confidence

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### ABSTRACT

TikTok has become a popular platform among teenagers as a means of entertainment, self-expression, and social communication. Through its creative features, students can showcase their talents and gain recognition from their peers. However, behind this popularity, the question arises as to whether the use of TikTok can actually boost students' self-confidence. This study aims to determine the relationship between the use of TikTok social media and the self-confidence of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 7 Palu. A total of 100 students were selected using random sampling techniques. Data were collected using a Likert scale-based questionnaire and analyzed both descriptively and inferentially, employing the Pearson Product Moment correlation test in SPSS version 25. The results show that TikTok usage is relatively high at 93%, while student self-confidence is also in the high category at 68%. The correlation test shows a value of  $r = 0.082$  with  $\text{sig.} = 0.418$  ( $p > 0.05$ ), meaning that there is no significant relationship between TikTok usage and student self-confidence. These findings suggest that student self-confidence is more influenced by factors such as family support, social environment, and personal experience, rather than the intensity of TikTok use. These findings suggest that student self-confidence is more influenced by factors such as family support, social environment, and personal experience, rather than the intensity of TikTok use.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

TikTok has transformed into a dominant global phenomenon, especially among teenagers and Generation Z. In Indonesia, this platform is a significant digital environment with more than 126 million users as of January 2024, dominated by the student age group [1], [2]. TikTok falls under the category of social media because it facilitates interaction, participation, and information exchange [3]. TikTok's relevance to psychological well-being lies in its function as an important space for adolescents who are in a period of mental, emotional, and social maturation [4] to express themselves creatively and form

their identity [5]. However, this easy access has the potential to expose users to unfiltered content, which can trigger excessive social comparison and influence the development of self-concept. Thus, understanding how adolescents use TikTok becomes crucial for mapping its potential psychological impact.

Active user engagement with TikTok is analyzed through the Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G). According to Katz, Blumer, and Gurevitch, this theory assumes that people actively evaluate and select media that they consider useful for communication purposes. The basis of U&G includes (1) the initiative determined by members of society to fulfill certain media satisfaction needs, and (2) media competing with each other in meeting audience needs [6]. Individuals actively choose media (TikTok) to seek internal gratification [7]. The gratification sought by students includes entertainment, relieving boredom, and expressing creativity [8]. These motives indicate that TikTok is not only consumed passively but is also used strategically to meet personal and social needs.

This activity helps students build their social identity and increase self-confidence through appreciation and interaction with other users [2]. Self-confidence is a vital and valuable aspect that forms the foundation for individuals to develop their full potential. Individuals with high self-confidence tend to think positively, express their opinions confidently, and remain resilient in the face of pressure [2]. The use of TikTok can play a positive role in boosting self-confidence if used wisely [6], with 54.5% of active TikTok teens reportedly having high levels of self-confidence [9]. However, these potential benefits are likely to vary depending on the type of content accessed, the purpose of use, and the nature of online interactions that adolescents experience.

Although TikTok has been shown to play a positive role in building self-confidence [6], an unresolved issue in research is the negative impact of excessive use. Observations indicate that high smartphone (digital media) use significantly impairs learning concentration and reduces student motivation in the classroom [10]; [11]. This suggests that empirical evidence regarding TikTok's influence on adolescent self-confidence remains inconsistent. Globally, the relationship between self-esteem and social media use remains inconsistent, often depending on mediating factors such as body image [12]. Therefore, the influence of TikTok on students' self-confidence is highly dependent on the intensity and patterns of their use. Based on these research gaps, a correlational study is necessary to clarify whether TikTok usage actually contributes to self-confidence or if other factors play a more significant role. This study aims to explicitly examine the correlation between the intensity of TikTok use and students' self-confidence levels.

## **2. METHOD**

### **2.1 Research Design**

This study employs a quantitative correlational design to investigate the strength and direction of the relationship between TikTok social media use and students' self-confidence. This design is cross-sectional, in which variable measurements are conducted simultaneously on a specific sample group [13]. A correlational–cross-sectional design was

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chosen because it allows researchers to assess natural variations in both variables without manipulating conditions, ensuring the findings reflect students' real behavioral patterns.

## **2.2 Participant Recruitment**

The sample for this study consisted of 100 eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 7 Palu. Sampling was conducted using the Random Sampling technique, in which each member of the population had an equal chance of being selected [14]. However, the selected respondents were ensured to have characteristics of active social media users, especially on TikTok, to maintain the relevance of the data in relation to the focus of the research variables. This inclusion criterion was essential to avoid bias and to ensure that respondents had sufficient exposure to the platform being studied, thereby strengthening the internal validity of the findings.

## **2.3 Research Instrument**

The research instrument used a Likert scale questionnaire. TikTok's social media usage was measured based on four indicators, according to Ajzen [15], namely focus of attention, immersion, duration, and frequency of use. Of the 24 statements compiled, 17 were declared valid through a validity test and had a Cronbach's Alpha reliability value of 0.943, indicating a very high reliability category.

Meanwhile, self-confidence is measured based on aspects according to Lauster [16], which include belief in one's abilities, optimism, objectivity, responsibility, rationality, and realism. Of the 32 statements compiled, 28 were deemed valid, with a Cronbach's Alpha reliability value of 0.709, indicating a reliable category. The instrument development process followed standard psychometric procedures, ensuring that each item was aligned with theoretical constructs and empirically tested to ensure accuracy, consistency, and content relevance.

## **2.4 Data Analysis**

This correlational study was analyzed descriptively and inferentially using SPSS version 25. Quantitative research, as defined by Creswell [13], is a structured and objective approach that aims to collect and analyze numerical data to obtain valid and reliable information about a phenomenon. The inferential analysis included Pearson's Product-Moment correlation test, which met the assumptions of normality and linearity. Prior to performing the correlation test, diagnostic checks such as normality and linearity assessments were conducted to ensure that the statistical assumptions for parametric testing were fully met, thereby enhancing the accuracy and credibility of the results.

# **3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

## **3.1. Results**

In general, the analysis results indicate that the majority of students fall into the high category in terms of both TikTok social media usage and self-confidence levels. This illustrates that most students actively use TikTok and have a fairly high level of self-confidence in social interactions. To clarify the results, see the following diagram. These

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descriptive findings provide a preliminary overview of the distribution pattern of both variables before entering inferential analysis.

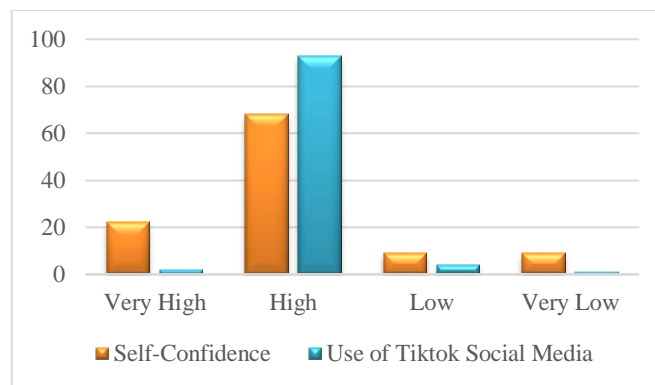


Figure 1. Distribution of Levels of TikTok Usage and Student Self-Confidence

Based on Figure 1, it can be seen that both variables tend to fall into the high category. This similarity in distribution suggests that students' psychological and digital behavior appear relatively homogeneous within the sample, which supports the suitability of further parametric testing.

Before conducting correlation analysis, classical assumption tests were first performed to ensure that the data met the requirements for parametric analysis. One of the assumption tests used was the normality test, which aimed to determine whether the data were normally distributed or not. The normality test was performed using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov method processed through SPSS version 25. Normality testing is essential because it determines the appropriateness of Pearson's correlation, which assumes that residuals follow a normal distribution

Table 1. Normality Test Results

|                                  |                | Unstandardized Residual |
|----------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| N                                |                | 100                     |
| Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup> | Mean           | .0000000                |
|                                  | Std. Deviation | 5.97457926              |
| Most Extreme Differences         | Absolute       | .046                    |
|                                  | Positive       | .026                    |
|                                  | Negative       | -.046                   |
| Test Statistic                   |                | .076                    |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)           |                | .165 <sup>d</sup>       |

Table 2. Linearity Test Results

|                       | Sum of Squares             | F     | Sig    |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------|--------|
| <i>Between Groups</i> | (Combined)                 | 0.929 | 0,0564 |
|                       | <i>Linearitas</i>          | 0,000 | 0,999  |
|                       | <i>Linearity Deviation</i> | 0.969 | 0,512  |

The results of the normality and linearity tests indicate that the research data are normally distributed and that the relationship between TikTok social media use and self-confidence is linear. Thus, the data meet the requirements for Pearson correlation analysis.

Table 3. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Test Results

|                     | Correlation         |            |
|---------------------|---------------------|------------|
|                     | Social Media TikTok | Confidence |
| Pearson Correlation | 1                   | 0,082**    |
| Sig. (two tails)    |                     | 0,418      |
| N                   | 100                 | 100        |
| Pearson Correlation | 0,082**             | 1          |
| Sig. (two tails)    | 0,418               |            |
| N                   | 100                 | 100        |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)

The Pearson Product-Moment correlation test yielded a correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) of 0.082 with a two-tailed significance value (Sig.) of 0.418. Since the significance value of 0.418 is greater than 0.05 ( $p > 0.05$ ), it can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between the use of TikTok social media and students' self-confidence levels. Based on the correlation coefficient interpretation guidelines provided by Sugiyono [14], the value of  $r = 0.082$  falls into the category of a very low or very weak relationship. This suggests that variations in TikTok usage do not significantly predict or explain variations in students' self-confidence, indicating that other psychological or environmental factors may have a more substantial influence on the development of self-confidence.

### 3.2. Discussion

This study found that although the level of TikTok usage and students' self-confidence were both in the high category, no significant correlation was found between the two variables. This finding contradicts several studies that link social media activity with increased self-confidence, as shown by Sumarni et al. [9] and Fitri et al. [17]. Both studies indicate that content creation and receiving social feedback (e.g., likes and comments) can provide social reinforcement and increase self-confidence. The discrepancy between previous findings and the present study suggests that the relationship between social media engagement and self-confidence may not be universally applicable across all adolescent groups or usage contexts.

However, the results of this study align with the views of Harahap et al. [4] and Suhaela [18], which conclude that the majority of adolescents use TikTok passively, primarily for entertainment and following trends, rather than as a platform for deep self-expression or identity presentation. Therefore, the intensity of consumption-oriented use alone is not a strong enough predictor of self-confidence formation. Furthermore, these findings are also in line with Syhnan [11], which highlights that the risk of digital addiction and excessive seeking of social validation can actually lower self-confidence, indicating that the impact of TikTok is ambiguous [19]. These patterns reinforce the notion

that the psychological outcomes of TikTok use depend greatly on the quality and purpose of engagement rather than on frequency alone.

In this context, Ramadhany et al. [20] emphasize that excessive use of TikTok can have various adverse effects, including cyberbullying, reduced social interaction, decreased self-confidence, and disruption of daily productivity. These effects have the potential to hinder the mental development of adolescents, including in terms of self-confidence, so that high TikTok usage does not always correlate with increased self-esteem. According to Musdalifah et al. [21], most students primarily use TikTok as a means to fill their free time. Therefore, excessive concern about TikTok usage among adolescents is not entirely appropriate. This suggests that policymakers and educators should avoid generalizing TikTok as either harmful or beneficial without first understanding the specific behavior patterns within their student populations.

The absence of a significant relationship between the intensity of TikTok use and self-confidence indicates that the formation of self-esteem is a complex construct and appears to depend more on stable personal and social factors than on the mere volume or intensity of social media use [22]. Self-esteem is formed through self-concept, self-worth, physical condition (internal factors), as well as parenting patterns, peer support, and life experiences (external factors). These factors provide a more stable foundation for self-confidence than fluctuating digital interactions. Thus, self-confidence development may be shaped more strongly by long-term psychosocial experiences than by short-term digital behaviors, even when the latter are highly frequent.

This finding is reinforced by the Uses and Gratifications Theory [23], which states that the impact of media is greatly influenced by the motives and purposes of its users. If students use TikTok primarily for entertainment gratification and content consumption without the motive to actively display or test their identity, such activities will be neutral and not strong enough to influence deep psychological constructs such as self-confidence [24]. In other words, media do not create uniform effects; instead, they are mediated by user needs [8]. Therefore, the neutral correlation observed in this study aligns with theoretical expectations that media effects are highly individualized and dependent on user-driven motivations.

The practical implications of this study suggest that the educational environment, particularly among school counselors and guidance and counseling teachers, needs to shift its focus from restricting social media use to fostering the quality of students' digital interactions. BK teachers are expected to guide students to change their online activities, especially on the TikTok platform, from passive consumption to a means of positive and constructive self-expression. Through self-instruction techniques in group counseling services [25], students are trained to instill self-confidence and apply it in their daily lives, allowing self-confidence to develop more stably and sustainably. Such interventions may help adolescents leverage social media in healthier ways, transforming digital platforms into spaces that support rather than undermine psychological growth.

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## 4 CONCLUSION

The insignificant correlation between high TikTok usage and adolescent self-esteem is a significant finding that challenges the prevailing view that digital media exposure is inherently harmful. Instead, it points to an interpretation in line with Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G), which suggests that personal factors and a stable social environment (rather than exposure volume) are the primary determinants of self-esteem. Practically, school counselors are encouraged to shift their focus from limiting screen time to improving the quality of digital interactions and guiding constructive self-expression. However, these non-significant findings call for further research using mixed-method or experimental designs to examine more complex mediating variables, such as content type, peer interaction quality, or parental support, to uncover the causal mechanisms between digital interactions and adolescent psychological development.

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E designed the study, developed the methodology, collected and analyzed the data, and drafted the manuscript. D.F. supervised the research process, validated the results, and provided substantial revisions to the manuscript. N. contributed to the validation of the findings, reviewed the manuscript, and approved the final version. H. contributed to the validation, proposed improvements, and approved the final version. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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