

Factors That Cause Insecurity in College Students When Viewing Tiktok Content

Dinny Rahmayanty^{1*}, Muhammad Alridho Lubis², Rani Mahardika³, Melati Rizki Mulyani⁴, Pitria⁵, Aisya Lizia⁶, Raja Dhimas Sadewa⁷

¹²³⁴⁵⁶⁷Guidance and Counselling Study Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,
Universitas Negeri Jambi

*¹(Dinny Rahmayanty)

✉dinnyrahmayanty@unja.ac.id

Abstract: Social media is an online platform that enables interaction, content sharing and collaboration between users. TikTok is one example of a popular social media platform, particularly in the creation and sharing of short videos. The use of TikTok has both positive and negative impacts on its users. One of the negative impacts of using Tik Tok is the emergence of feelings of insecurity that affect the mental well-being of its users. By understanding the factors that influence feelings of insecurity, we can identify effective intervention strategies to reduce their negative impact and promote college students' mental and emotional well-being. This research highlights the urgency and relevance of understanding the factors that cause insecurity in university students when viewing Tik Tok content. Topics covered include social media, TikTok, content, insecure, factors that cause insecurity by TikTok content, and efforts to overcome insecure feelings in college students.

Keywords: Social Media, TikTok, Insecure, Student

INTRODUCTION

As time progresses, many changes occur where these changes occur in the economic, social, political, and especially technological fields. Technological advances create various digital media that utilise the internet as the main source of access. The existence of digital media can make it easier for someone to do anything online. In recent years, the development of information and communication technology has enabled wider and faster interaction through social media platforms. This phenomenon not only changes the way we communicate, but also has a significant impact on people's behavioural patterns and perceptions.

Social media is one of the results of the rapid development of technology. Social media is considered a universal socializing platform through internet-based applications. There are several social

media that are quite popular today such as Instagram, TikTok, Telegram, Facebook, Line, WhatsApp and others. These various applications make it easier for people to carry out their daily activities. People also casually show their identity on social media because social media does not directly show their identity (Valentin in (Syauqii, 2022).

Social media can be described as a medium for social interaction between people, creating, sharing, and exchanging information, including ideas and various content, in virtual communities. (Sulianta, 2015). Many social media are now often used by various groups, especially one of them, TikTok. As of November 2019, the TikTok app is the most downloaded non-game app. The TikTok application is now in demand in the scope of society because when someone uses TikTok, they will get an effect, where the effect will provide its own pleasure and entertainment for its users. TikTok is an application that aims to be a social networking and video platform that can be played by its users and the results can be downloaded and then disseminated by other TikTok application users.

Just like other social media, TikTok users also experience positive and negative impacts for their users (Fitri, in (Harnata & Prasetya, 2023). TikTok can also have a positive impact, seen by the many people who use the TikTok application to be creative or provide information about something, even to manage in promoting their products / businesses. On the other hand, there is also a negative impact caused by the existence of TikTok. Not a few women and men post their good or bad life stories, or post their own self-portraits. This triggers cyberbullying on TikTok social media.

Many people blaspheme women or men who upload themselves but do not match the expectations of those who see or are commonly referred to as netizens. Indirectly, TikTok social media can cause anti-social attitudes in a person. In addition, a person can feel embarrassed, afraid, anxious about posting a self-portrait, even though it is their right to post or not. This is known as insecure (Cahyono in (Syauqii, 2022). Insecure is a sense of fear or anxiety towards the surrounding environment from one's own dissatisfaction. Insecure itself can be interpreted as a feeling of insecurity. According to (Rahmah, 2019) in (Harnata & Prasetya, 2023) Insecure is a mental state that causes someone to feel "insecure", someone feels excessive anxiety and fear, and this can apply to many things.

Various studies and media reports have noted increased feelings of insecurity and low self-esteem in college students exposed to TikTok content. Content that highlights unrealistic beauty standards, glamorous lifestyles and physical perfection is often a major trigger for feelings of insecurity and adverse social comparisons. In addition, the pressure to gain popularity and recognition through follower counts and number of impressions can also increase feelings of dissatisfaction. Thus, it is important to conduct further research to understand more deeply how TikTok content affects college students' self-perception and mental well-being, and to develop effective intervention strategies to address its negative impact.

The factors that cause insecurity in this problem can be seen from several things, the first is the existence of Social Comparison, where TikTok often displays content that depicts an ideal lifestyle, perfect physical appearance, and success that seems easy to achieve. This can trigger unhealthy social

comparisons and lead to feelings of insecurity in students about their appearance, achievements, or lifestyle (Arianna M. Pruitt et al., 2022), the second is Body Image Culture: Content on TikTok often displays narrow and unrealistic beauty standards, which can promote an unhealthy body image culture (Samantha Beaulac et al., 2021), the next can be seen from External Validation: Some students may depend on the number of likes, comments, and followers on TikTok to validate themselves, which can lead to feelings of insecurity if they do not get the expected positive response, and the last is the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO): Content on TikTok can trigger feelings of "missing out" or "not being good enough" in college students, which can contribute to feelings of insecurity (Beyza Oba et al., 2022).

This study aims to identify factors that lead to feelings of insecurity in college students when viewing content on TikTok. By understanding these factors, we can develop effective strategies to address the issue and promote better mental health among university students. Given the importance of understanding this phenomenon, research on the factors that cause insecurity in college students when viewing TikTok content has become increasingly urgent. Therefore, in this study, we will outline the urgency and relevance of research on the factors that cause insecurity in college students when viewing Tik-Tok content.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. The descriptive qualitative approach is a research method that aims to describe in depth the phenomena or conditions that occur in a particular context, without manipulating or intervening in the variables studied. This study aims to identify and describe the factors that cause insecure feelings among students when viewing tiktok content. The participants of this study totalled 4 people with the necessary criteria. Data were collected through observation and in-depth interviews with a number of Jambi University Guidance and Counselling students who experienced insecurity due to TikTok content.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

TikTok Content Analysis

Content is information presented in the form of visuals, audio or music, body dialect and so on. Most of the content found on social media is usually contained in media that is deliberately created to communicate something to the audience (Siregar & Abidin, 2023). Meanwhile, TikTok is an application used to create content in the form of short videos with a maximum duration of 3 minutes where the application has available editing features such as effects, filters, animations, text and others with the aim of making videos look more attractive.

TikTok is an application that aims to be a social network and video platform that can be played by its users and the results can be downloaded and then disseminated by other TikTok application users (Kusuma in Siregar, 2023). TikTok is one application that is in great demand by the public, especially young people such as students. When someone uses TikTok they will get an effect, where the effect

will provide pleasure and entertainment for its users. Most TikTok content contains trends that are in demand by people. This trend makes many TikTok users interested in creating content or videos of the trend. The trends on TikTok are very diverse ranging from challenges, dance, lip sync and others (Siregar, 2023).

Just like other social media, TikTok users also experience positive and negative impacts for their users (Fitri in Harnata, 2022). TikTok can also have a positive impact, seen by the many people who use the TikTok application to be creative or provide information about something, even to manage in promoting their products or businesses. Through videos and songs or songs in this application feature, it is easy for information to be conveyed and can provide stimulation for those who see it, imitate and spread it. In addition to the positive impact of TikTok social media, it also has a negative impact arising from the use of social media, namely that some users often compare themselves to other people in various ways (Fauziah in Harnata, 2022). Usually people often make comparisons through several aspects such as physical shape, body, lifestyle, skills, and others.

Some TikTok social media users will express themselves through the content they create in the form of pictures, videos, writings or others. In a content there is also interaction between the content owner and the social media users in it, the interaction given can be in the form of giving "like" and comments on the content that is displayed. The content has 3 components that can be a benchmark for how someone is interested in the content (Suyani, in (Siregar & Abidin, 2023): 1. Frequency, which is how often the respondent sees the content 2. Duration, which is how long the respondent spends viewing the content 3. Attention, namely the audience's interest in the content, interest can be seen from how the situation, conditions and audience response after seeing the content whether they like it or not.

Overview of Insecure Feelings

Insecure is a condition where individuals have feelings of insecurity, think the world is a threatening place and contains dangerous and selfish people. Individuals who are insecure often feel rejected, isolated, anxious, and hostile from their surroundings. The existence of insecure feelings itself considers itself inferior so that it has a low self-concept. (Harnata, 2022).

When someone experiences feelings of inadequacy or lack of confidence, they may experience a lack of self-esteem. People who face uncertainty are more likely to feel rejected and alienated, hopeless, guilty, untrustworthy, narrow-minded, and prone to hypochondriacism. (Siregar & Abidin, 2023). Mu'awwanah, defines insecurity as a fear of something triggered by dissatisfaction and uncertainty about one's own capacity (Roida Pakpahan 1, 2023). Those who are experiencing insecurity feel they are in a low position, because they consider other people they see as more qualified than themselves and therefore they feel unsure of themselves (Nadhira, in (Roida Pakpahan 1, 2023).

According to (Harnata & Prasetya, 2023) Insecure, which is a mental state of someone feeling "insecure" or excessive worry, is a sign of anxiety that can be applied to various situations. The phenomenon of anxiety can be complex, because this weakness is a combination of feelings of

inadequacy, anxiety, fear, jealousy, and other bad emotions, so that a person feels insecure. Some of the feelings that cause students to feel insecure because they see TikTok content include feeling inferior, feeling afraid, and feeling anxious (Azizah, 2020).

This insecure phenomenon can be found in various groups, one of which is among students (Greenberg, 2020). The influence of social media content, especially TikTok, on students' self-confidence and self-security cannot be underestimated. An example that can be taken is through an interview with Case RN, a 2nd semester Guidance and Counselling student, being one of the real examples. Exposure to teenage videos on TikTok featuring luxurious lifestyles and near-perfect physical appearance made her feel dissatisfied with her own body and face. As a result, RN often avoids social activities because she feels insecure about her appearance. In fact, BD, a 4th semester Guidance and Counselling student, experienced a decline in academic performance due to obsession with the content of online game creators who always show off their professional gaming skills.

Not only that, SR, a 4th semester Guidance and Counselling student, feels jealous seeing videos of her friends on TikTok who are always travelling to hits and attending fancy parties. Despite being financially well-off, SR finds her life boring and lacks socialisation. To gain recognition, she is willing to spend a lot of money to follow a lifestyle like on TikTok. Meanwhile RD, a 2nd semester Guidance and Counselling student, felt inferior to her English skills after often seeing content creators who speak fluent English. His confidence to communicate decreased, affecting his performance in class. These cases show that TikTok content has great potential to cause insecurity in students if not addressed wisely and still believe in their own strengths.

Factors Causing Insecurity

Feelings of insecurity can be caused by circumstances or events that cause a person to be anxious, anxious and afraid. Melanie Greenberg in (Pangestu, et al 2021) explains several factors that make someone insecure, namely:

1) Insecure due to failure or rejection of recent events greatly affects people's mood and feelings about themselves. Because unhappiness has an impact on self-esteem, failure and rejection can have a two-fold impact on self-confidence. This is like the case that happened to one of the Guidance and Counselling students initials AI, a student and also a content creator. seeing many creators on TikTok who are the same age as her have millions of followers and their content is always viral. This made AI feel that she was not talented or creative enough. She began to doubt her own abilities and potential as a content creator.

2) Insecure due to experiencing social anxiety. Fear of being evaluated by others can lead to anxiety which in turn makes them avoid social situations because they feel uncomfortable. This type of insecurity is generally based on distorted beliefs about their self-worth. This is like the case that occurred in one of the Guidance and Counselling students initials RN who felt insecure because she often saw content featuring very popular and charismatic people, RN began to feel anxious when she

was around other people. She felt that she could not follow the social standards displayed on TikTok. This caused RN to become more withdrawn from social activities in real life.

3) Third, perfectionism-driven insecurity where some people have very high standards in everything they do, but life doesn't always turn out the way they want it to, if they are constantly disappointed and blame themselves for being anything less than perfect, there will be feelings of discomfort and unworthiness. TikTok content that showcases a beautiful and stunning physical appearance can affect a person's level of insecurity. Those who see this content may feel unworthy and embarrassed to make similar videos, for fear of the negative comments they will get. This is the case with SR, who is a diligent student and always wants to produce the best work in every assignment. She is very active on social media, especially TikTok, where she often sees creative videos from other graphic designers. SR started using TikTok as a source of inspiration for her projects. She followed many famous designers' accounts and often watched tutorials and videos of their work. Over time, SR began to feel that her work did not compare to what she saw on TikTok. The designers she followed seemed very productive, creative, and always produced perfect works. This insecurity and drive for perfectionism caused SR to experience stress and burnout. She also started to avoid certain tasks for fear that the results would not match her expectations.

There are many factors that cause a person to be insecure, but one of the factors that make a person feel insecure, especially for young women today, is related to physical appearance (Roida Pakpahan 1, 2023). In this case, social media can have an impact on the formation of beauty standards, women who have beautiful faces or what is called good looking on social media will get more attention from the public so that they become popular and after becoming popular they will become influencers where an influencer will always be followed by his appearance, style of dress and others so that they are used as a beauty standard for they followers.

The occurrence of feelings of insecurity to certain individuals occurs due to social self-comparison. Festinger (1954) states in his theory that this happens because everyone has an innate urge to evaluate themselves and often tries to evaluate themselves by comparing themselves with others. The development of this theory began with a consideration of social communication about changing opinions in social groups. Generally, the theory sees that the process of social influence and certain competitive behaviours stem from the need to evaluate oneself and this need for evaluation is based on comparison with others.

In comparing themselves with others, consciously or unconsciously, individuals may choose different others. According to social comparison theory, there are 2 ways a person compares himself with others, namely, the first is upward social comparison. As the name implies, upward social comparison is when a person compares their abilities, opinions or traits with others who are considered better than themselves. The second type, downward social comparison is a situation where a person compares his abilities, opinions or traits with others who are considered not as good as him (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2013).

Usually, people compare themselves with others who are not as good as themselves when they want to feel that they are enough or good. Meanwhile, someone compares themselves with others who are considered better than themselves so that they get inspiration or motivation to develop better (Cherry, 2020). It should be noted, if the level of upward social comparison has exceeded reasonable limits, it does not make a person motivated, but instead makes us see ourselves as inferior and there is a possibility of negative emotions that can trigger depression. Likewise, downward social comparison, if done within reasonable limits, can make a person happy and feel positive emotions while increasing self-esteem. But on the other hand, downward social comparison can also cause unhappiness because we know the fact that a condition or situation can change at any time into something worse (Nortje, 2020).

Attempts to Overcome Insecure Feelings in Students

Some efforts that can be made in overcoming feelings of insecurity according to (Bizartia, 2023), are as follows:

- a. Think positive and reduce negative thoughts
Negative mindsets can affect self-confidence. By changing mindsets and replacing them with more positive and realistic mindsets, individuals can have better self-confidence. This is because the negative thoughts they think are not necessarily true. This means that even if we previously felt incapable or unable to do something, we can try to develop a positive mindset within ourselves that we can do something if we want to.
- b. By recognising your own strengths and weaknesses
Everyone has their own strengths and weaknesses. When we make mistakes or have weaknesses, don't think of it as something to be ashamed of. Because everyone has made mistakes and no one is truly perfect. What we need is not only to continue developing our strengths, but we also need to improve and learn so that we don't repeat those mistakes again.
- c. Don't compare yourself to others
Every individual has different experiences, skills, uniqueness, and achievements. Therefore, stop comparing yourself with others and focus on realising your potential and developing it.
- d. Build healthy social relationships
Self-confidence can be improved through relationships and support with others. Having a positive environment, such as good friendships, not toxic, and having social group activities that will help to improve the emotional and self-confidence of the individual.
- e. Encouraging exploration and development
Discovering new interests and hobbies or developing new skills will definitely boost self-confidence. Through self-exploration and development, individuals can experience growth and improvement.
- f. Self-acceptance

Feeling comfortable and accepting oneself is key to building healthy self-confidence. Teenagers need to understand and accept their strengths and weaknesses and learn to value themselves without comparing themselves with others.

g. **Appreciation and support**

Positive appreciation and support from family, friends and teachers help adolescents feel valued and accepted. This can play an important role in building healthy self-confidence.

Furthermore, efforts to overcome feelings of insecurity in college students due to TikTok content can involve several steps, including:

1. **Increased Self-Awareness:** Helping students to understand that the content they see on TikTok often does not reflect real life as a whole. This can be done through education about unrealistic body image concepts on social media.
2. **Emotion Education:** Providing knowledge about emotional skills and how to manage feelings such as insecurity or lack of confidence. This could include relaxation techniques, meditation, or emotional counselling.
3. **Self-empowerment:** Encouraging students to focus on their own achievements and strengths rather than comparing themselves to others on social media. This could be through developing interests and hobbies that strengthen a sense of identity and confidence.
4. **Healthy Use of TikTok:** Teaching healthy and positive use of social media platforms like TikTok, including selecting content that supports mental and emotional wellbeing, and limiting screen time.
5. **Social Support:** Building community and support among students on campus to support each other and build a healthy sense of self.
6. **Collaboration with Parents and Educators:** Engage parents and educators in efforts to support students in overcoming feelings of insecurity due to TikTok content, including open communication and joint education about the influence of social media.

CONCLUSION

Social media are online platforms that facilitate social interaction, creativity, and information exchange within virtual communities. TikTok, one of the most popular social media platforms, offers various features to create and enjoy short video content. While TikTok provides entertainment and creative opportunities, users may also experience negative impacts such as self-comparison that can lead to feelings of insecurity. Content on social media, including TikTok, plays an important role in shaping one's self-perception and body image. Insecurity is a feeling where a person feels uncomfortable and lacks confidence in their abilities and tends to compare themselves with others, such as comparing physical appearance, career achievements, or public speaking skills. Insecure feelings can be overcome through various strategies, including changing negative thought patterns, accepting oneself, and building healthy social relationships. In addition, approaches involving educators, parents,

and social support are also important in helping individuals overcome feelings of insecurity that may arise due to TikTok and other social media content.

LITERATURE

- Aronson, E., Wilson, T. D., & Akert, R. M. (2013). *Social psychology* (8th ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Beaulac, S., et al. (2021). "TikTok and Body Image: Exploring the Impact of Social Media on Body Dissatisfaction." *Journal of Eating Disorders*, 9(1), 1-10.
- Cherry, K. (2020, May 1). Social comparison theory in psychology. Diperoleh dari: <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-the-social-comparison-process-2795872#citation-1>
- Festinger, L. (1954). A theory of social comparison processes. *Human Relations*, 7(2), 117–140. doi:10.1177/001872675400700202
- Harnata, A. A. (2022). *Gambaran Perasaan Insecure di Kalangan Mahasiswa yang Mengalami Kecanduan Media Sosial Tiktok (Studi Kasus Mahasiswa Psikologi UKSW)* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Harnata, A. A., & Prasetya, B. E. A. (2023). Gambaran Perasaan Insecure di Kalangan Mahasiswa yang Mengalami Kecanduan Media Sosial Tiktok. *Bulletin of Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 4(3), 823–830. <https://doi.org/10.51214/bocp.v4i3.437>
- Oba, B., et al. (2022). "Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and Its Relation to TikTok Usage and Psychological Well-Being among University Students." *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 20(4), 1647-1660.
- Pruitt, A. M., et al. (2022). "The Impact of TikTok on Body Image and Self-Esteem among College Students." *Journal of Social Media Studies*, 4(2), 145-168.
- Roida Pakpahan 1, D. Y. 2. (2023). Analysis of The Influence of Flexing In Social Media on Community Life. *Issue Period*, 7(1), 173–178. <https://doi.org/10.52362/jisicom.v7i1.1093>
- Siregar, D. M., & Abidin, S. (2023). Pengaruh Konten Tiktok Nadya Khietna Putri (@Mieayamthebstt) Terhadap Tingkat Ketidakpercayaan Diri (Insecure) Remaja Di Kota Batam. *SCIENTIA JOURNAL : Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa*, 5(3). <https://doi.org/10.33884/scientiajournal.v5i3.7539>
- Syauqii, F. (2022). Pengaruh Media Sosial Terhadap Keberadaan Insecure: Sebuah Analisis. *Communication & Social Media*, 2(2), 74–78. <https://doi.org/10.57251/csm.v2i2.978>

