

# Tik-Tok Use and Its Impact on Student Interaction: A Qualitative Study of Senior High School Students in Jambi, Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

*The rapid expansion of social media has fundamentally transformed adolescents' social interactions, positioning digital platforms as integral elements of everyday life. This study examines patterns of TikTok use among senior high school students and analyzes its implications for their social interaction practices. Drawing on Manuel Castells' theory of the network society, this research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach conducted at SMA Negeri 5 Tebo, Jambi Province, Indonesia. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with twelve informants, non-participant observation, and document analysis, and were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The findings reveal that students spend between one and five hours per day on TikTok, accessing the platform across various times and locations. TikTok facilitates the expansion of students' social networks and provides spaces for self-expression and peer connectivity. However, intensive engagement with the platform also contributes to a decline in face-to-face interaction and fosters tendencies toward social withdrawal, which may affect students' communication skills and the quality of interpersonal relationships. This study highlights the dual role of TikTok as both an enabling and constraining force in students' social lives. Balanced guidance and contextual supervision are therefore essential to maximize the social benefits of social media while mitigating its potential risks*

*Keyword: Information Society; Social Interaction; Tik-Tok; Social Media Use; Network Society*

## 1. Introduction

The rapid development of information and communication technology has fundamentally reshaped contemporary social life, particularly in the ways individuals interact, communicate,

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and construct social relationships (Ferine et al., 2023; Pantu, 2018). In recent decades, social media platforms have emerged as central arenas of social interaction, especially among adolescents, transforming everyday communication practices from predominantly face-to-face encounters into digitally mediated interactions. Various platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, and TikTok have become an important part of people's daily lives, especially for the younger generation (Cahyono, 2016; Mubarak et al., 2024). These platforms are no longer merely technological tools but have become social environments where identities are constructed, relationships are negotiated, and social meanings are produced.

Among various social media platforms, TikTok has gained unprecedented popularity and influence, particularly among young people. Since its global launch in 2016, TikTok has offered users the ability to create and share short-form videos through an interactive and algorithm-driven system (Ilahin, 2022; Mahardika et al., 2021; Mubarak et al., 2024). Features such as music integration, visual effects, live streaming, and personalized content feeds have positioned TikTok as a highly immersive platform. Unlike earlier social media platforms that emphasized text-based communication, TikTok foregrounds audiovisual expression, enabling users to communicate emotions, ideas, and identities in highly visual and performative ways.

In Indonesia, the growth of TikTok reflects broader trends in digital media consumption among adolescents. Data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) (2024) indicate that Indonesia has more than 221 million internet users, with Generation Z representing the largest proportion. TikTok ranks as the second most popular social media platform after YouTube, with over 127 million active users and an average daily usage time exceeding ninety minutes. These figures suggest that TikTok is not only widely adopted but also deeply embedded in the daily routines of Indonesian youth (Slice, 2024).

The majority of TikTok users are the adolescents, including high school students (Rahmawati, 2019; Wisnuadi, 2022). For senior high school students, TikTok serves multiple functions. It operates as a source of entertainment, a medium for self-expression, a space for peer interaction, and a channel for accessing information. Through TikTok, students engage in content consumption, content creation, and interactive practices such as commenting, sharing, and live streaming (Astuti & Andrini, 2021). These activities extend beyond leisure and increasingly shape how students relate to one another, how they spend their time, and how they perceive social relationships.

However, the growing dominance of TikTok in adolescents' lives has also generated sociological concerns. Several studies have suggested that excessive engagement with TikTok may negatively affect academic concentration, reduce direct social interaction, and alter communication patterns among young people (Astuti & Andrini, 2021; Fauzan et al., 2021). While digital platforms facilitate connectivity, they may simultaneously displace face-to-face interaction, leading to changes in the quality and depth of social relationships. This tension between connectivity and disconnection represents a central paradox of digital social life.

These dynamics are clearly observable at SMA Negeri 5 Tebo, a senior high school located in Tebo Regency, Jambi Province, Indonesia. Preliminary observations indicate that nearly all students at this school actively use TikTok on a daily basis. Students engage with the platform not only outside school hours but also during permitted school activities, such as class meetings and extracurricular events. TikTok has thus become intertwined with students' academic, social, and personal lives.

From a sociological perspective, the widespread use of TikTok raises critical questions regarding the transformation of social interaction patterns among adolescents. According to Soerjono Soekanto, humans are inherently social beings whose development depends on sustained interaction with others. Social interaction plays a crucial role in socialization processes, identity formation, and the development of communication skills (Fatimah, 2024). When interaction patterns shift from direct, face-to-face encounters to mediated digital forms, the nature of social relationships may be fundamentally altered.

This phenomenon can be further understood through Manuel Castells' theory of the network society. Castells argues that contemporary society is increasingly structured through digital networks that reorganize social relations, power structures, and cultural practices. In a network society, social interaction is not merely mediated by technology but is actively shaped and restructured by it. Digital platforms such as TikTok thus function as social spaces that influence how individuals connect, communicate, and construct meaning.

Despite the growing body of research on social media use among adolescents, significant gaps remain. Much of the existing literature focuses on issues such as digital addiction, mental health, or academic performance, often within urban contexts. Studies that specifically examine TikTok's influence on adolescents' social interaction patterns—particularly in rural or semi-urban educational settings—remain limited. Moreover, many studies rely on quantitative approaches that may overlook the nuanced meanings and experiences associated with everyday social interaction.

This study seeks to address these gaps by examining patterns of TikTok use and their implications for social interaction among senior high school students in a semi-urban Indonesian context. By adopting a qualitative approach, this research aims to capture students' lived experiences and interpret how TikTok shapes their social relationships, communication practices, and interaction patterns. The findings are expected to contribute to sociological discussions on digital interaction and provide insights for educators, parents, and policymakers concerned with adolescents' social development in the digital era.

## **2. Theoretical Review**

To analyse the impact of TikTok use on student interactions, this article uses the theory of network society introduced by Manuel Castells, a leading sociologist and thinker on how technology has affected human life. Castells developed the theory of network society on the assumption that social relations and power structures are shaped through complex communication networks. He argues that social media not only changes the way information is consumed, but also has profound implications for power, identity and social structures (Susanto, 2025). Furthermore, he explains the view of the emergence of new societies, cultures and economies from the perspective of the information technology revolution such as television, computers, and so on. Castells considers that changes in information technology have caused fundamental changes in the capitalist system to form informational capitalism. Then at the end of the 19th century, Castells also considered that a society influenced by the development of information is called a network society (Sugihartati, 2014).

According to Castells (2010), a network society is a form of social organisation that emerges in the information age, where social relationships and interactions are increasingly mediated by digital technology and communication networks. In a network society, social structures and power dynamics are intertwined through networks that transcend national boundaries, creating complex global interactions. Social structures in network societies are patterns of relationships and interactions between individuals, groups and organisations that are interrelated and interact in social networks and power dynamics in network societies include complex interactions between individuals, groups and institutions that are interconnected through technology.

The main characteristic of a network society is that it has extensive and complex networks that enable interaction and exchange between different individuals and organisations. Decentralisation is the process by which power and decision-making is not centred on a single entity or institution but rather spread across different actors in the network. Interactivity refers to the ability of individuals to communicate and interact with each other directly through digital platforms. Power shift refers to a change in the power structure where power is no longer centred on a particular elite or institution but rather dispersed among various actors in the network, and cultural diversity refers to the diversity of values, norms, traditions and practices that exist in a globally connected society. Networks create information flows where networks allow information to be disseminated quickly and efficiently, capital refers to resources be they financial, social, or intellectual that can be moved and accessed through networks, and culture is almost instantaneous around the world, supporting an interconnected global economy (Castells, 2010). Thus, the existence of a network society is able to bring people, organisations together in a global reach. They are no longer limited by time and space, but can access the world as a whole, even community interaction can reach anywhere and anytime.

## **3. Method**

### **3.1. Research Setting**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to examine the patterns of TikTok use and their implications for students' social interaction. A qualitative approach was selected because the research seeks to understand social phenomena from the perspectives of participants and to capture the meanings they assign to their everyday experience (Creswell,

2009). Rather than measuring variables or testing hypotheses, this study focuses on interpreting how students experience and negotiate social interaction in the context of digital media use (Afrizal, 2017).

Qualitative descriptive research is particularly appropriate for sociological studies that aim to explore social practices and interaction patterns within specific contexts. This approach allows the researcher to remain close to the data while providing rich descriptions and analytical interpretations of participants' narratives. In this study, qualitative inquiry enabled an in-depth exploration of how TikTok mediates students' communication, relationships, and social engagement within both school and non-school settings.

The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 5 Tebo, a public senior high school located in Tebo Regency, Jambi Province, Indonesia. The school is situated in a semi-urban area, representing a social context that differs from metropolitan educational environments often emphasized in previous studies. This setting was deliberately selected to examine how digital social media platforms such as TikTok shape social interaction in areas where traditional face-to-face interaction remains socially significant.

SMA Negeri 5 Tebo was chosen based on several considerations. First, preliminary observations indicated that TikTok use among students was widespread and intensive. Second, the school environment provided diverse opportunities for observing both formal and informal social interactions, including classroom activities, breaks, extracurricular programs, and school events. Third, institutional accessibility and cooperation facilitated effective data collection.

Research participants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique commonly employed in qualitative research to identify informants who possess relevant knowledge and experience related to the research topic. The criteria for student participants included: (1) active use of TikTok, defined as daily or near-daily engagement with the platform; (2) enrollment as a student at SMA Negeri 5 Tebo; and (3) willingness to participate in interviews and observations.

A total of twelve informants participated in the study, consisting of ten students and two teachers. Student participants represented different grade levels to capture variation in TikTok use and interaction patterns. Teachers were included to provide complementary perspectives on students' social behavior and interaction within the school environment. This combination of student and teacher informants allowed for data triangulation and enriched the analysis.

### **3.2. Data Collecting**

Data were collected using three primary techniques: in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and document analysis. These methods were employed in a complementary manner to ensure data triangulation and enhance the credibility of the findings.

In-depth interviews were conducted with all twelve informants using semi-structured interview guides. This format allowed the researcher to explore key themes while remaining flexible to follow participants' narratives. Interview questions focused on patterns of TikTok use, motivations for engagement, perceived changes in social interaction, and experiences of communication both online and offline. Interviews were conducted in stages to allow for clarification and deeper exploration of emerging themes.

Non-participant observation was used to capture students' natural social interactions within the school environment. Observations focused on how students interacted during class activities, breaks, and informal gatherings, as well as how they used mobile devices in social settings. The researcher did not intervene in participants' activities, allowing interactions to unfold naturally. Field notes were systematically recorded to document observed behaviors and interaction patterns.

Document analysis was conducted to complement interview and observation data. Documents included school profiles, student enrollment records, and institutional regulations related to digital media use. These documents provided contextual information and supported the interpretation of empirical findings.

### **3.3. Data Analysis Procedures**

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (2007), which consists of four interconnected stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data analysis began during the data collection process and continued iteratively throughout the study.

In the data reduction stage, interview transcripts and observation notes were coded thematically to identify recurring patterns and key concepts. Coding was conducted manually to maintain close engagement with the data. In the data display stage, coded data were organized into thematic matrices to facilitate comparison and interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn by identifying relationships among themes and interpreting findings in light of relevant sociological theories. The unit of analysis in this study was individual students who actively use TikTok. Analytical attention was given to how individual experiences reflected broader patterns of social interaction within the school context.

## 4. Result and Discussion

### 4.1. TikTok Use Among Student

The findings indicate that TikTok use is nearly universal among students at SMAN 5 Tebo. Almost all students (97%) are active TikTok users and reported daily engagement with the platform, with usage duration ranging from one to five hours per day. There are 472 students at SMAN 5 Tebo that is distribute to 15 class room at class X (phase E) and class XI (phase F). Totally, 458 of students (97.03%) have TikTok account, and only 14 students (2.97%) do not have TikTok account. They are not only have accounts, but the majority of students are active users of the TikTok application. TikTok is accessed at various times, including after school, in the evening, and during weekends. In some cases, students also reported accessing TikTok during school hours when opportunities arise, such as during breaks or less structured classroom activities.

Students' engagement with TikTok extends beyond passive content consumption. Many informants actively participate in content creation by producing short videos, engaging in trending challenges, and utilizing TikTok's creative features such as music overlays, filters, and editing tools. Interactive practices, including commenting on videos, responding to comments, sharing content, and participating in live streaming sessions, are also common. These practices suggest that TikTok functions not merely as an entertainment platform but as a space of social participation and interaction.

From the perspective of network society theory, these patterns indicate that students are embedded in digital networks that structure their daily routines and social engagement. TikTok operates as a node within a broader digital network that connects students to peers, influencers, and wider online communities. Through continuous engagement, students remain socially connected even when physically separated, reinforcing the centrality of digital networks in their social lives.

Table 1. TikTok Account User Data at SMA 5 Tebo

No	Grade	Students with TikTok Accounts	Students Without TikTok Accounts	Total	%
1	E1	28	4	32	87,50%
2	E2	29	3	32	90,62%
3	E3	30	2	32	93,75%
4	E4	32	0	32	100%
5	E5	28	2	30	93,33%
6	F1	26	0	26	100%
7	F2	32	1	33	96,97%
8	F3	30	0	30	100%
9	F4	29	0	29	100%
10	F5	30	0	30	100%
11	XII Science 1	35	0	35	100%
12	XII Science 2	34	0	34	100%
13	XII Social Studies 1	33	0	33	100%
14	XII Social Studies 2	32	0	32	100%
15	XII Social Studies 3	30	2	32	93,75%
Total		458	14	472	

Source: Primary Data

### 4.2. Patterns of TikTok Use Among Students

#### 4.2.1. Duration and Places

Overall, the time spent by SMA N 5 Tebo students on TikTok varies. Some of them only use TikTok for one hour a day, while others spend up to five hours. However, the majority of students use TikTok for a relatively long time each day, even up to 5 hours. This indicates

that the TikTok application is no longer just a regular entertainment medium, but has become part of the routine and digital lifestyle of today's students.

Although the majority of students use it for a long time, not all students use TikTok for long periods. There are also students who access this application for shorter periods, as expressed by KN:

*"It can be 1-2 hours a day." (Khayla, February 23, 2025)*

This statement shows that there are variations in TikTok usage patterns among students. For some students like Khayla, TikTok is just extra entertainment in their free time, so they can control how long they use it and it doesn't get in the way of their main activities.

Students who use TikTok for long periods of time say that TikTok has become an app that they open almost every day, whether they have free time, after school, or even before going to bed at night. This high duration of TikTok use shows that students not only use the app to watch short entertainment videos, but also actively engage in various activities within it, such as creating content, following viral trends, searching for information, and interacting through comments and private messages. In other words, TikTok has shaped certain behavior patterns among students, making social media use a part of their daily lives.

The phenomenon of high usage duration can be further examined using the perspective of network society theory proposed by Manuel Castells. In his theory, Castells explains that today's society lives in a social structure shaped by digital networks. Information and communication technology not only mediates relationships between individuals but also shapes the way humans interact, communicate, and access various resources. In the context of students, TikTok is a concrete example of how social media has become part of a network that connects individuals in an active and dynamic virtual space.

In addition, the high intensity of TikTok usage can also be seen as part of students' social and psychological needs. Through TikTok, they not only seek entertainment, but also gain social recognition, build their self-identity, and become part of a wider community. However, excessive usage duration can also impact other aspects of students' lives, such as reducing study time, lowering the quality of direct interaction with the surrounding environment, and disrupting rest patterns if not properly controlled.

Therefore, the findings regarding TikTok usage duration are an important point in this research, as they indicate that social media has become an integral part of students' lives. The high duration of use not only illustrates the popularity of the application, but also indicates a shift in social interaction patterns, information absorption, and the lifestyle of students in the digital age. Therefore, it is important for schools, parents, and the community to understand this phenomenon more deeply in order to provide appropriate guidance and direction in the use of social media, especially TikTok, among teenagers.

Students of SMA Negeri 5 Tebo uses the TikTok application in various places that they consider possible and convenient for accessing social media. The places where TikTok is used are very diverse and are adjusted to the situation and flexibility of time available to students. Students do not limit the use of TikTok to certain places, but tend to access this application whenever and wherever they feel comfortable and have access to the internet and digital devices.

However, the use of TikTok in the school environment is restricted. Based on observations and information from other informants, it is known that SMA Negeri 5 Tebo has a fairly strict policy regarding the use of cell phones in the school environment, especially during class hours. As a form of supervision of students' concentration in learning, the school requires students to store their cell phones in their respective lockers during learning activities. This is done so that students are not distracted by digital devices and can follow lessons optimally.

Despite restrictions on cell phone use, there are certain moments when students are allowed to use their cell phones. These moments include class meetings, graduation days, art performances, digital-based learning, or other non-academic activities. In these situations, students take advantage of the opportunity to access TikTok. They usually use TikTok to document school activities, create content with friends, or simply fill their free time between events. This shows that TikTok also serves as a means of expressing creativity and socializing within the school environment, not just as personal entertainment.

Outside of school, TikTok usage tends to be freer and more intense. At home, students feel more comfortable opening the app, whether in their private rooms, living rooms, or while relaxing after finishing their schoolwork. Home is the main place where TikTok is most often used because it is considered a safe and comfortable space. Meanwhile, outside the home,

such as when playing with friends, hanging out at a cafe, or walking in public places, students also often access TikTok either to simply watch videos, create content, or follow viral trends. This situation reflects that the use of TikTok is very flexible and can adapt to the active and agile lifestyle of teenagers.

The use of the TikTok application by students at Tebo 5 Public High School tends to be done during their free time, when they do not have important or formal activities to do. TikTok is used more often when students are feeling bored or not involved in direct social activities, such as chatting with friends or participating in school activities. One informant, FG, explained that he usually opens the TikTok app when he is not interacting with friends. This statement reflects that TikTok is a medium for filling free time as well as an escape from boredom or loneliness. When there are no friends to talk to or no direct social activities, students tend to seek entertainment or alternative social engagement through the digital world, one of which is through TikTok. They feel more entertained by watching short videos, following viral content, or simply exploring the TikTok homepage, which is filled with content tailored to users' interests.

In addition to their free time, students also tend to use TikTok when they come home from school, while waiting for a ride, before going to bed, or after finishing their schoolwork. They take advantage of these moments to access social media without disrupting their main activities. In some cases, students also use TikTok while doing other activities, such as eating, listening to music, or when traveling.

#### **4.2.2. Types of Content; Entertainment and Education**

For students at SMA N 5 Tebo, entertainment content is one of the most frequently enjoyed types of content on TikTok. They find that videos with entertainment themes such as comedy, parodies, or funny sketches provide enjoyment, relieve boredom or fatigue, and help them relax amid their busy study routines. As expressed by one of the informants, this shows that TikTok has become an easily accessible means of entertainment for students. With short video durations and a wide variety of content, they can enjoy various types of entertainment anytime and anywhere, whether at home, at school after school hours, or when hanging out with friends.

*"I watch content related to entertainment or comedy." (Tsabitna, February 27, 2025)*

This statement shows that the informants' motivation for using TikTok is to seek entertainment. Entertainment content can describe students' media consumption patterns, which tend to be recreational in nature. This shows that TikTok influences interaction patterns, because consumption of entertainment content can have an impact on how students build interactions.

In addition to being a source of entertainment, TikTok is also used by students as a medium to obtain new information and knowledge. Educational content is one of the most frequently viewed types of videos because it provides additional insights beyond school lessons. As expressed by one of the informants, this statement shows that students not only use TikTok to fill their spare time, but also to search for reading materials or information in the form of short videos. Educational content on TikTok is usually presented in an interesting, light, and easy-to-understand manner, making it easier for students to grasp the information being conveyed.

*"I watch educational content." (Tsabitna, February 27, 2025)*

This statement shows that informants do not only use TikTok for entertainment, but also utilize the platform as a source of information and knowledge. This also illustrates the positive impact of social media, namely encouraging students to access educational material. TikTok is not only oriented towards entertainment, but also towards the exchange of knowledge obtained from educational content.

In addition to entertainment and education, dance content is one of the most popular types of videos among students at SMA N 5 Tebo. TikTok is known as a platform that popularizes various short dance challenges, which are then followed by many users, including students. This shows that students often access dance videos because they are considered fun, exciting, and trendy. Dance content on TikTok not only provides entertainment but also encourages students to move, express themselves, and participate in viral trends.

*"There are a lot of dance videos." (Arini, February 24, 2025)*

This statement shows that informants often find and watch dance content on TikTok. Dance content encourages students to imitate movements, participate in trends, or share videos with their peers. This shows that TikTok is not only a means of entertainment but also a space for social interaction that can strengthen or even shape relationships between students.

Another type of content that is also popular among students at Tebo 5 Public High School is "A Day in My Life" content. This content consists of short stories about a person's daily life, presented in the form of short but interesting videos. "A Day in My Life" content is appealing to students because it provides a realistic picture of other people's daily lives, in terms of their activities, lifestyles, and how they spend their time. Through this content, students can gain inspiration, for example, on how to manage their study time, ideas for positive activities outside of school, and tips for daily productivity.

*"Adventurer, a day in my life, and POV." (Muhamad, February 22, 2025)*

This statement shows that informants prefer content with themes of adventure, daily life, and POV because this type of content reflects students' need to see other people's experiences that are more relevant to their daily lives. TikTok can also encourage them to share their personal lives on social media or compare their experiences with others. Thus, TikTok is not only a form of entertainment but also a means of self-expression among students.

#### **4.2.3. Purpose of TikTok Use; Consumption and Production of Content**

For students at SMA Negeri 5 Tebo, TikTok is one of the main media for seeking entertainment. This application is considered capable of providing pleasure and relieving boredom through various types of content that are short, interesting, and in line with the interests of teenagers. As stated by one of the informants. This statement shows that the main purpose of many students using TikTok is to get entertainment. They watch various types of videos such as comedy, dance, challenges, and other light-hearted content that can entertain them in between school routines. With short video durations, students find it easier to get entertainment without having to spend a lot of time.

*"On TikTok, I look for entertainment." (Khayla, February 26, 2025)*

This statement shows that the informants' motivation for using TikTok is for entertainment. Entertainment is an important factor in everyday life. Students use TikTok mainly to seek entertainment; they tend to share funny videos, follow trends, or watch light-hearted content with their friends. TikTok also plays a big role in shaping students' social interactions.

In addition to being a medium for entertainment and creativity, TikTok is also used by students as a means to make friends and expand their social circle. Through various interactive features such as comments, private messages, video sharing, and live streaming, students can communicate with many people, both from their immediate environment and from other regions. As stated by one of the informants, this statement shows that TikTok functions as a social bridge that connects students with new people. They not only establish relationships with peers at school, but also with other users who have similar interests or hobbies. In this way, TikTok helps them build a wider network of friends.

*"It can also be used to make friends." (Keysya, February 26, 2025)*

This statement shows that, in addition to being a medium of entertainment, TikTok is also seen by informants as a means of expanding their circle of friends. This is because the function of social media is not limited to viewing content, but also to forming new social networks. Interactions through TikTok can influence students' social lives; they can get to know people outside their school circle, meet people who share the same interests, and even build online communities.

For students at Tebo 5 Public High School, TikTok is not only used for entertainment, but also as a medium for seeking information. The various types of informative content available on this platform help students acquire new knowledge quickly and easily. As stated by one of the informants, this shows that TikTok now serves as an alternative source of information for students. The information they obtain varies, ranging from current news, study tips, general insights, to information related to their interests and hobbies. With short, creative presentations and simple language, students find it easier to understand the material presented.



*"I use TikTok to find information." (Kevin, February 22, 2025)*

This statement shows that TikTok is not only used for entertainment, but also utilized by students as a source of information. This is because TikTok's informative content can broaden students' knowledge and insights. In addition to entertainment, students also use TikTok as a medium for obtaining information. This is because the information obtained is often shared in conversations with peers or through content uploaded to personal accounts.

Based on the results of the research conducted, it is known that students at SMA Negeri 5 Tebo do not only use TikTok as a medium for entertainment, but also have various other purposes that are more productive and communicative. For most students, TikTok has become a means of self-expression, conveying messages, and building social interactions in a more creative and modern form. One informant, ARS, stated that he creates content on TikTok because he wants to provide positive information to others. The purposes of using TikTok by students, as described in the informants' statements, include personal, social, and even economic aspects. Personally, students use TikTok as a space to develop creativity, express ideas, and build self-identity.

*"I create content on TikTok because I want to inform or tell people that playing TikTok can make us successful and allow us to share ideas or inspiration." (Abdi, February 27, 2025)*

This statement shows that informants are not only viewers of content, but also creators of content on TikTok. The role of students as creators illustrates a form of active interaction on social media. Creating content to inspire and inform confirms that TikTok can be a means of self-actualization, message delivery, and a space for building a positive image. TikTok provides opportunities for students to influence others, build social networks, and even view the platform as a means to success.

In addition to entertainment and information seeking, students also use TikTok as a means of live streaming. This feature allows them to interact directly with other users, share activities, or simply chat with the audience watching their broadcast. As stated by one of the informants, this shows that TikTok provides a space for students to appear and interact in real-time with others. Through live streaming, they can express themselves, share their hobbies or activities, and communicate with friends and new users.

*"I use TikTok for live streaming." (M. Ulil, February 22, 2025)*

This statement shows that the informant utilizes the live streaming feature on TikTok. Because live streaming is a form of direct interaction with the audience, it is different from simply watching or uploading short videos. This shows that students can build two-way communication, expand relationships, and express themselves through digital interaction. The live streaming feature also provides users with the opportunity to gain new social experiences, such as receiving comments, support, or even appreciation from viewers.

#### **4.3. Social Interaction Patterns of Students at SMA N 5 Tebo**

The social interaction patterns of students at SMA N 5 Tebo are very diverse, both in the form of face-to-face interactions in the school environment and through digital media. These interactions are not only limited to the classroom but also extend to various school activities and even virtual spaces through the use of social media.

In the school environment, direct social interaction is the main pattern of interaction among students. During teaching and learning activities, interactions are mostly formal between teachers and students, for example through quest and answer sessions, class discussions, group work, and material delivery. This relationship reflects a structured communication process, in which students play the role of active learners who absorb knowledge, while teachers play the role of mentors and guides. In addition, students also often form small study groups to exchange ideas and help each other understand difficult material.

Outside of academic activities, more relaxed and informal interactions are also common. For example, during breaks, students usually gather to chat, joke around, or simply share stories about their daily experiences. These kinds of activities strengthen a sense of togetherness, deepen friendships, and create a warm and friendly school atmosphere. Often, the topics of conversation are related to the latest trends, including those from social media such as TikTok.

In addition, extracurricular activities and student organizations are also important platforms for building social interaction patterns. Through activities such as scouting, sports,

arts, or student council organizations, students can interact with friends from other classes and different grades. These interaction patterns help students expand their friendship networks, foster a sense of responsibility, and hone their teamwork skills. Major events such as class meetings, interclass competitions, and national holiday celebrations are also important moments that showcase the high intensity of interaction between students, both in a competitive and collaborative atmosphere.

However, the social interaction patterns of students at SMA N 5 Tebo are not limited to the school environment. The presence of social media, especially TikTok, has become an important part of their daily lives. Students use TikTok to share moments, comment on their friends' content, or simply watch entertainment. In many cases, activities on TikTok are also connected to face-to-face interactions at school. For example, trends or challenges that are viral on TikTok are often discussed together when meeting in person at school. Conversely, school activities such as competitions, farewells, or class gatherings are often captured on video to be uploaded to TikTok.

Thus, the students' interaction patterns show a connection between the real world and the digital world. On the one hand, they continue to communicate directly, which strengthens friendships at school, while on the other hand, they are also actively building social relationships in a wider digital space. This shows that the social life of students at SMA N 5 Tebo is dynamic, where face-to-face interactions and interactions through social media complement each other.

This overall pattern of interaction shows that school is not only a place for students to learn academically, but also a social space that shapes identity, togetherness, and solidarity. Meanwhile, social media, especially TikTok, serves as an additional means of expanding communication and adding a new dimension to students' social relationships.

#### **4.4. The Impact of TikTok Use on Students' Social Interaction**

##### **4.4.1. Expanding Friendship Circles**

One of the most prominent positive impacts of TikTok use among students is its ability to expand their circle of friends and open up a wider space for social interaction. TikTok provides various features such as comment columns, private messages, and live streaming that allow students to communicate with each other, share experiences, and express themselves freely. These features give students the opportunity to stay connected with their peers even when they are not always meeting in person, allowing social relationships to continue to flourish in the digital space. In other words, TikTok acts as a bridge that connects students in a more flexible friendship network that is not limited by space and time.

Interviews with several informants show that TikTok is not only used to maintain relationships with existing friends, but also as a means to make new friends. Several students said that they can find friends with similar interests through educational content, entertainment, or certain popular trends. Collaborative activities such as making videos together, participating in challenges, or simply sharing content strengthen the sense of togetherness and solidarity among them. This collaborative process is not only about producing digital content, but also about building social interactions that foster self-confidence and improve the quality of relationships between individuals.

##### **4.4.2. Decrease in Face-to-Face Interaction**

On the other hand, the intensity of direct or face-to-face interactions among students tends to decrease as more time is spent using TikTok. In various situations, especially when they feel bored or have nothing to do, students prefer to open the TikTok app as a form of quick and easily accessible entertainment rather than having conversations or doing activities with the people around them. One informant even stated that he uses TikTok when he is not interacting with friends, which shows that this app has become the main choice for filling free time as well as a substitute for direct social activities.

This phenomenon confirms that TikTok is often used as an alternative to interaction, not just as a form of entertainment. When real social interaction is replaced by digital activities, the quality of face-to-face communication has the potential to decline. Students, who should be strengthening their relationships with friends or family in person, prefer to switch to the fast and instant digital space. This condition reflects a shift in the communication patterns of the younger generation, where interpersonal relationships are increasingly rare through face-to-face conversations and more often take the form of short comments, online messages, or merely symbolic interactions such as likes and shares.

This is in line with the phenomenon of shifting interactions in the digital age, where communication is increasingly shifting from face-to-face patterns to mediated communication. This shift has two consequences: on the one hand, it makes it easier for students to stay connected practically, but on the other hand, it has the potential to reduce the emotional depth and quality of social relationships that are usually stronger through face-to-face interactions. In other words, although TikTok is able to maintain social connectivity, its existence also encourages distance in real interactions, which has an impact on students' social attachment in their daily lives.

#### 4.4.3. Tendency to Isolate

In addition to reducing the intensity of face-to-face interactions, the use of TikTok also encourages students to become more isolated. Many of them feel more comfortable watching videos or creating content on the app, rather than engaging in activities with family, friends, or their social environment. This habit makes TikTok their main escape when they feel bored or want to fill their free time, so students tend to ignore opportunities for direct interaction.

This situation reflects the emergence of individualism among students, where real social relationships are being replaced by activities in the digital space. They prefer to spend time with their devices rather than with the people who are physically present around them. This shows a shift in values in social interaction, where emotional closeness and face-to-face communication are increasingly being replaced by brief interactions facilitated by social media.

If this trend continues in the long term without any control, it can have a number of social implications. First, students' direct communication skills have the potential to decline because they are accustomed to conveying messages briefly through comments, emoticons, or likes, so their in-depth communication skills are not well developed. Second, the sense of togetherness that usually grows from social activities together can be reduced, because students are more focused on the virtual world. Third, an emotional distance between students and their immediate environment may form, which ultimately affects the quality of interpersonal relationships and social attachment in daily life.

### 5. Conclusion

Based on research on the impact of TikTok use on the interaction patterns of students at SMA N 5 Tebo, it can be concluded that the majority of students (97.03%) use TikTok for 1-5 hours every day, making TikTok part of their daily routine. In addition to watching videos, students actively create content, follow trends, and interact on this platform. TikTok is used in various places and during free time, such as at home, school, and when bored. Apart from entertainment, this application is used to search for information, expand social networks, and express oneself. The use of TikTok has an impact on students. First, it expands their circle of friends, where students can communicate with old and new friends through comments, private messages, and content collaboration. Second, it reduces face-to-face interaction, as most of their time is spent using TikTok, thereby reducing direct conversation with people around them. Third, it creates a tendency to isolate oneself, where students are more interested in spending time with their gadgets than engaging in real social activities, which has the potential to reduce direct communication skills and weaken a sense of togetherness. Thus, TikTok plays a significant role in shaping students' interaction patterns, influencing communication, learning, and social relationships in the digital age. Therefore, guidance and supervision are needed so that the use of TikTok provides optimal benefits and minimizes risks.

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