

TIKTOK SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE MOTIVES: ANALYSIS OF USES AND GRATIFICATION THEORY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to find out the motives for using TikTok social media to get gratuities. Users choose a medium to meet their needs and get satisfaction. This study describes the usefulness and satisfaction of using TikTok social media users and the Theory of Uses and Gratification. The research used a qualitative approach with a data collection method with in-depth interviews directly with five informants. The results of the study explained that the first motif of using TikTok media is to get entertainment. The TikTok application is trending and is seen by users as a new application that is not only interesting to use, but also used by many others, thus motivating users to use TikTok. The second motivation is to get information. Users get a lot of information such as health information, beauty tutorials, makeup, fashion, and even culinary referrals. The third motive is to present themselves or self-expression through videos they create creatively that is added with information. The peak satisfaction in the motive of presenting oneself is feedback from others regarding the content presented. The fourth motivation is the motive of escaping from boredom which can lead to addiction to TikTok media.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of technology makes changes in various aspects of human life. The presence of the internet is not just for information, but for other purposes such as entertainment, escape from boredom, and self-expression. Internet technology offers unlimited freedom to track information and connect with other individuals. In addition, internet technology has also given rise to new forms of media and *platforms* that can encourage users to share, communicate, interact, present themselves to other users in various social media, and exchange content (Whiting & Williams, 2013). Kaplan

& Haenlein (2010) explain that social media is an internet-based application formed by Web 2.0 technical and ideological basis. One social media short video app, such as TikTok, has become a popular phenomenon (Y. Wang, 2020). Since its launch in China in 2016, the social media app TikTok has been a huge success, with over 2 billion downloads worldwide in 2020 (TikTok, 2020).

TikTok is an app with 63.1 percent million total users on iOS and Android devices. This figure is an increase of 1.6% compared to the same period in 2019. The country with the most app downloads is

Indonesia, which accounts for 11% of the total TikTok downloads presented in Figure 1.1.

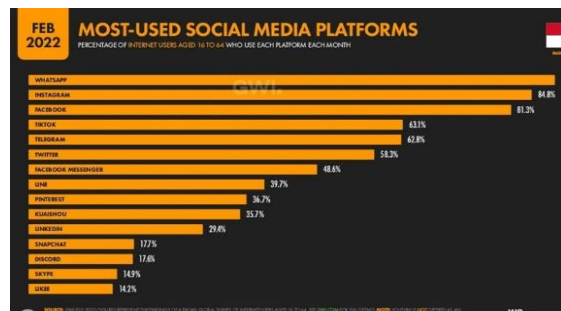


Figure 1. Largest use of social media platforms in 2022

Source: Hootsuite, We Are Social 2022

TikTok social media users share and follow user-uploaded content, mostly user-generated daily. Despite its fast-growing user base, TikTok stands out from other social media apps with its high user engagement. TikTok's social media usage surpassed the number of Facebook users in just a short period. The app with the highest monthly usage in minutes is TikTok (Southern, 2021).

TikTok achieved tremendous success, although its presence as a social media *platform* is still relatively new. Hence the question arises of what motivates TikTok users to spend time on the TikTok applications. This study using the theory of Uses and gratifications (Blumler & Katz, 1974) is focused on the motives for TikTok's social media use and the gratuities obtained.

Based on the background above, researchers are interested in researching the motives for use that will be analyzed with the Uses and Gratifications (UAG) theory. The UAG theory was first formulated by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974) and for approximately 30 years was used to study mass media (Liu, 2015). Along with the development of communication and information technology, the theory of Uses and Gratification can be used to examine the use and satisfaction of audiences in new media such as social media (Ruggiero, 2000).

UAG theory can explain why individuals use media as an efficient means

to meet their various needs (Chen et al., 2013). Katz *et al.* (1974) explain that UAG is an audience-focused theory assuming an approach that involves (a) the social and psychological origins of (b) needs, which generate (c) expectations (d) mass media or other sources, which lead to (e) various patterns of media exposure (or involvement in other activities), generate (f) the need for gratification and (g) other consequences that may be largely undesirable. The assumption of UAG theory is an active audience, the selection and use of they are purposeful, purpose-directed, and motivated to satisfy their needs or desires social and psychological (Liu, 2015).

This implies that they have the control to select media and can freely engage in using it by sharing messages with various features available. Research that applies UAG to social media can be used to explain users' motivations, needs, and desires in using it (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Smock et al., 2011). Smock et al., (2011) also explain one of the theoretical assumptions that the media will exert a different influence on each individual. (Katz et al., 1974) state that the media establishes relationships through instrumental, affective, or integrative relationships with various people (self, family, friends, and nation). They link social background and circumstances with sought-after satisfaction and formulate a typology of media-people interaction.

McQuail (2010) observes that people are motivated to watch television to distract, escape, and emotional release; for personal relationships, for friendship, and social utility; personal identity; for personal reference, exploration of reality, and reinforcement of values; and surveillance to obtain news and information. Along with the development of information and communication technology, the theory of Uses and Gratification is also developing. Many researchers have noticed the use of the Uses and Gratification Theory.

The theory of Uses and Gratification has been widely used in various disciplines,

but it can also help explain the use of new media. The theory of use and gratification is relevant to social media because of its origins in the communication literature (Whiting & Williams, 2013). Whiting & Williams, (2013) in an article titled "Why People Use Social Media: A Uses and Gratification Approach", apply Uses & Gratification Theory on social media by conducting exploratory studies and in-depth interviews with 25 people.

The research explores and discusses the usability and satisfaction users receive when using social media. The study identified ten uses and gratifications of using social media. The ten uses and gratifications are social interaction, information retrieval, leisure, entertainment, relaxation, communication utility, convenience utility, expression of opinion, information sharing, and knowledge monitoring of others.

Several studies on TikTok this implies that the audience has the control to choose the media and can freely engage in using it by sharing messages with various available features. Research that applies UAG to social media can be used to explain the motivations, needs, and desires of users in using social media with the theory of uses and gratifications have been carried out. One of them is research by Diaz & Duarte (2022) Titled 'TikTok Practices among Teenagers in Portugal: A Uses & Gratifications Approach'. The study used a quantitative approach and was conducted on adolescents in Portugal. The results showed significant differences in TikTok usage between younger teens (10-12) and older teens (13-16). Younger teens are more cautious about privacy and enjoy more experimentation as content creators, while older teens are more focused on building an audience. Entertainment and self-expression are the main motivations for using the TikTok *platform*. About 50% of the study sample acknowledged at least one behavior that indicates addiction.

Research Diaz & Duarte (2022) has not specifically researched the differences in TikTok's social media use at different ages

and professions. Each individual uses social media to meet their needs differ based on their respective perceptions (Ruggiero, 2000). Computer-mediated communication is unlikely to give a uniform effect, due to the social context, the individual, and the nature of social relationships (Ginossar, 2008).

Assumptions of the Theory of Uses and Gratification according to the originators of this theory Katz, Blumler, and Guberich (1974) cited West & Turner (2008) is as follows: (1) The audience is active and its use of media is goal-oriented; (2) initiatives in linking satisfaction to specific media choices are found in the audience, (3) media competes with other sources for the satisfaction of needs.

People have enough self-awareness of media use, interests, and motives so that they can provide an accurate picture of the media. Users actively *post* content on TikTok, but social media is usually passive. Active use of social media seems to be overall more beneficial for users (Verduyn, et al. 2021).

Model research frame of thought starts from *motivasi* individuals using media to meet needs. A person's needs can be satisfied through *offline* and *online* media. The selection of media and the active involvement of individuals are influenced by social, psychological, and individual characteristics.

METHOD

Qualitative research is considered the most appropriate to answer research questions. Qualitative research begins by focusing on the research problem, the participants to be observed, the data collected, and how the data will be managed and analyzed (Miles et al. 2014). Qualitative data, with its emphasis on people's life experiences, is fundamentally well suited to find the meaning that people place on events, and the processes of their life structure, and to connect these meanings with the social world around them (Miles et al. 2014). With qualitative data, one can maintain a chronological flow, see which events caused

which consequences, and derive useful explanations.

The paradigm used in the research is the constructivism paradigm used to explore the use of TikTok in providing satisfaction to its users. Each constructs meaning subjectively from his experiences when interacting with the environment. The formation of meaning is continuously negotiated by individuals who have social and historical differences that operate within each individual's life (Creswell, 2009). The reasons for using the constructivism paradigm include: from the ontological side (the nature of reality), explaining social reality is a form of formation (construction) of individual subjects involved in research, namely, mainly researchers and researchers is subjective and compound. "Subjective" means to see from the point of view researched as a research subject, while the epistemological side (the relationship between the researcher and researched) occurs dynamic, informal, and familiar social interactions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Content of Result and Discussion

TikTok has a mission which is to inspire users' creativity, make them happy, build a global community, authentically create and share, discover the world, and connect with others (TikTok, 2020). As previously stated, this study has the aim of identifying user motives in using TikTok and the satisfaction or gratification obtained.

Before starting to explore the motivation for using TikTok social media, researchers asked the reason for asking about informants' experiences in using the media. The thing that informant 1 stated was that at first the TikTok content he saw was not only the content he followed but the content that appeared and integrated with his Instagram and Facebook social media. Then of the many contents, some content is interesting and followed, but until now the content that appears is not only what he followed but also did not follow. The

Researchers recruited active TikTok users between the ages of 21 and 26 totaling five people who belong to the demographic profile of the majority of TikTok users. To go deeper, researchers conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews directly with five people with diverse professions, including students, bank employees, doctors, housewives, and a lecturer. Informants were recruited through private networks using the researcher's WhatsApp social media. Sampling is carried out using *purposive sampling* techniques with *snowball sampling*.

The study was conducted in Jakarta which ranks fourth, the most-viewed city on TikTok with a total of 37.1 million views (Kompas.com, 2021). After obtaining results from interviews with informants, researchers sorted out usability and gratuities and analyzed individual motives using TikTok social media.

Data analysis is said to be three concurrent activity streams: (1) condensation of data, (2) display of data, and (3) drawing conclusions or verification. informant stated that he simply randomly searched for anything that came up. Like informant 1's statement follows.

I see content, not just content that I follow but other content that I don't follow. But I still watch it even though it's random. Hahaha

(Informant 1, interview July 2022)

The same thing was revealed by informants 2 and 3 that they could see TikTok content that was integrated with several existing social media such as Instagram and Facebook. In addition, informant 2 stated that watching TikTok videos were original because some friends and relatives sent interesting TikTok videos thus motivating them to use them which were indeed trending.

I used TikTok at first because friends sent interesting videos and the TikTok app was indeed trending.

(Informant 3, interview July 2022)

Some informants stated that they chose the TikTok application because it is easier to be creative, and interesting. Any information is presented in the TikTok media and is not boring. Like the informant's statement 4.

I prefer to use this TikTok app because it is easier and more interesting, and more creative

(Informant 4, interview July 2022)

The entirety of the informants stated that they often share video links with relatives both those who have the TikTok app and those who do not when they come across an interesting or funny video. Like the informant's statement 3.

I often send funny and cool videos to my friends and relatives.

(Informant 3, interview July 2022)

The results of the interview can explain that the experience of using TikTok media is easy, creative, interesting, and not boring. The use of trending TikTok causes individuals to be interested in using the media.

Motives for entertainment

Affective needs are those that occur due to emotional, pleasant, or aesthetic experiences. Affective needs have to do with the edification of aesthetic, pleasant, and emotional experiences. This is related to the experience and satisfaction that the audience feels when using media to meet their needs. The motive of getting entertainment is stated by the users because when using the media TikTok gets excitement. This can be interpreted as a type of satisfaction.

Informant 5 stated that the fundamental reason for using TikTok media is for entertainment. He further stated that there are so many videos on TikTok that make him his mood. In addition, many of

these videos contain useful information. Thus the explanation.

The most basic thing is entertainment, yes, there are so many videos that make a good mood, sometimes some are funny so they affect my mood.

(Informant 5, interview July 2022)

Informant 2 also revealed that Tiktok brings joy because the music and the dances presented attract attention, such as the following phrase.

Tiktok videos bring joy to me because of the interesting dances accompanied by music. There are also funny videos that sometimes make me laugh to myself. So for me, it's a kind of entertainment.

(Informant 2, interview July 2022)

This is in line with the research revealed by Sheldon & Bryant (2016) who researched a *platform* similar to the TikTok application, namely Instagram. Instagram is another visually based medium. The results of the research on Instagram stated that excitement was found as a motive for users to use Instagram which at the time was trending. The same can explain the trending TikTok usage motive.

Motives for getting information

It is necessary to obtain information, knowledge, and understanding of something. This need is based on the desire to understand and master the environment, also satisfying curiosity. It was revealed by several informants that the motivation for getting information prompted him to use TikTok, such as the following phrase informant 2.

I can get a lot of information by using TikTok. Information from any field there is presented. My interest in this medium is due to the way it is presented which is not boring.

(Informant 2, interview July 2022)

The same was revealed by informant 1 that in addition to entertainment a lot of information is presented in TikTok such as health information and culinary referrals. That's the statement.

I like Tiktok videos because they are not just entertainment, but some of the videos presented here are health information that I think is important, which is well packaged and interesting. There is also a lot of tutorial information and culinary references.

(Informant 1, interview July 2022)

Informant 4 also strengthens the use of Tiktok as a source of various information that is packaged attractively so that it is not boring. So the phrase.

Starting from information on beauty, health, how to cook, education, and dance that is interesting to see. And it makes me not bored using the application.

(Informant 4, interview July 2022)

The results of interviews with informants can explain that the TikTok application is interesting because it provides a lot of content so that many people use it. Starting from health information, beauty, how to cook, education, interesting dance, and culinary references.

Motives for presenting oneself

Personal integrative needs are needs related to increasing credibility, confidence, stability, and individual status. These things are obtained from the desire for self-esteem to meet the needs of the audience in increasing self-confidence and increasing understanding of oneself.

For individual content creators who tend to be heavy users, the TikTok application becomes a hobby or pleasure and satisfaction of self-expression, identity creation, and seeking fame or self-existence. The motivation for using TikTok to present oneself is can be socially beneficial. The result of interviews with 4 informants who actively post videos and share them with

others is to present themselves. Informant 4 who are young doctor by profession stated they can share their likes with others openly on TikTok and be themselves.

Furthermore, informant 4 stated that TikTok's social media allowed him to *post* and share self-produced content as a form of self-expression. The motivation for utilizing the TikTok feature is by creating content by imitating other people's choreography with certain songs that are considered interesting. He added content containing health messages and hopes to be useful to people who watch it. Thus the wording

I am satisfied to use TikTok because it is other than expressing myself. I joined the choreography of the artist² as well as the song, but I added health messages. Information comes from the knowledge that has been studied in the hope of being useful to others. It became a satisfaction for me if the knowledge I gave was used and useful. I'm really satisfied that there are people who follow from the beginning and that they ask according to what I explained and the comments that they followed and succeeded. So it's not in vain.

(Informant 4, interview July 2022)

TikTok media can facilitate or be a source of "likes" from others watching. The "like" or "like" sign can be interpreted by the user as an achievement. The more "likes" the user satisfaction becomes higher. The same research (G. Wang et al., 2019) that examined the motives of expressing oneself and then social rewards, has been shown to motivate the use of other platforms, such as Instagram, YouTube, or WeChat.

Informant 5 also revealed that TikTok's features are very different in their use or way of utilizing them. Users can see the lives of others in the form of videos. Tiktok has interesting things like the advantages of its videos and it motivates users to present themselves to see others as satisfied. Like the following statement.

TikTok is different from other social media. We can see other people's lives in the video, as well as motivate me to present myself. Those comments and likes from others made me satisfied.

(Informant 5, interview July 2022)

This can be interpreted as TikTok social media with its features that can share videos and *post* and present themselves to others. The content is uploaded to attract the attention of other users and cause a reaction (for example, comments, and "likes"). The combination and the sign of "like" tau like is a valuable social reward and satisfaction for TikTok users. A liking sign by giving a "like" sign is considered an achievement.

According to the research,¹ such activity (an achievement) is an equally powerful motivation behind the use of applications. craving positive feedback. This is in line with Ruggiero's (2000) statement that the media can empower individuals in

Provide the information they are looking for and the information they create.

The motive for escaping from boredom.

Someone's need for *escapist needs* when he wants to make an escape or a shift related to emotional release, tension, and the need for entertainment. Diversion is categorized as the satisfaction derived from the use of media, involving the escape from routines and problems.

All informants in their interviews stated that using social media satisfied their satisfaction, thus avoiding boredom. The same thing is explained by Katz (1973) regarding the use of mass media. So it can be explained that the informants interviewed chose the type of social media TikTok because of the interesting application so that it can relieve boredom.

As informant 3 explains He uses TikTok social media to pass the time. In between free time, usually want to relieve boredom by looking for other activities. Thus the explanation.

Among the social media I use, TikTok is a social media that I use very often every day, 2 to 3 hours a day. This removes boredom from the daily routine.

(Informant 3, interview July 2022)

The use of TikTok makes informant 1 is to escape boredom. He further stated that TikTok's social media can sometimes delay its various activities and be addictive.

Initially using Tiktok to escape boredom, ga Bersa has been for several hours and various jobs even sleep delayed due to seeing various videos.

(Informant 1, interview July 2020)

The escape motive is the most relevant motive for the use of social media in research (Smock et al., 2011). Furthermore, the results of the study explain that people have the opportunity to experience new things and this is the motivation that drives the use of social media.

CONCLUSION

The first motive for using TikTok media is to get entertainment. The TikTok application is in fact trending and is seen by users as a new application that is not only interesting to use, but also used by many others, thus motivating users also to use TikTok. The second motivation is to get information. Users get a lot of information such as health information, beauty tutorial, *makeup*, fashion, and culinary referrals. The next motive is to present themselves or self-expression through creatively created videos that are added with information. The peak satisfaction in the motive of presenting oneself is *feedback* from others regarding the content presented. The fourth motivation is the motive of escaping from boredom which can lead to addiction to TikTok media.

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