

## Analysis of use the *TikTok* application as a self-defense mechanism of denial

Nila Fadhila Al Hakim<sup>1\*</sup>, Setiawan Osi Rubianto<sup>2</sup>, Nur Aziz Afandi<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Ushuluddin & Dakwah IAIN, Kediri, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Polytechnic of Statistic STIS, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup> Faculty of Ushuluddin & Dakwah IAIN, Kediri, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup> nilafadhila20@gmail.com; <sup>2</sup> setiawanosi17@gmail.com; <sup>3</sup> nurazizafandi@gmail.com

\*Correspondent Author

KEYWORDS

A B S T R A C T

**Denial**  
**Popular culture**  
**Self defense mechanism**  
***TikTok***

TikTok has developed into a popular culture in the world. This popular culture prioritizes the popularity and convenience of its users. TikTok is an application that has the function of providing entertainment to the public with short photo and video content accompanied by songs. This application is often used in spare time or when experiencing boredom during activities, so that it becomes a means of escape from various irrational thoughts caused by various problems. This study aims to analyze the use of the TikTok application as a self-defense mechanism in the form of denial. The research method used is the library research method with the data sources being papers, books and articles. The results of this study explain that a person will tend to try to satisfy his needs by avoiding something that is unpleasant and towards or approaching something that is fun. That is, if someone experiences an uncomfortable feeling when they are in a place, then that person will avoid that place or when someone is not comfortable doing something, then they will do something else to get comfortable. Using the TikTok application is something that is comfortable when someone experiences discomfort due to the problems they face. Thus, the use of the TikTok application can be a self-defense mechanism in the form of someone's denial of circumstances that make him uncomfortable.

This is an open-access article under the [CC-BY-SA](#) license



### Introduction

Globalization brings significant influence in various fields. One of them is the growing development of communication media in the field of technology through cybermedia. How to interact through social media has developed into a new culture called popular culture. This culture is synonymous with the term "mass culture" or mass culture that is created and can be used en masse. Popular culture is contemporary, where this culture can emerge uniquely and keep up with the times.

According to (Utami & Baiti, 2018) The current pattern of life has changed after many people have been facilitated by internet technology in the form of many social media

applications. Based on survey data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (AJPII), it is revealed that internet users in Indonesia in 2022 will increase to 77.02 percent or as many as 210 million active users. Social media is the most frequently accessed internet content by internet users, namely 89.15 percent.

The social media application Tiktok is one of the applications with the highest usage intensity in Indonesia. Based on data on the Goodstats page, Indonesia will become the country with the second most TikTok users in the world after the United States in 2022 (Aditya, 2023). Then, based on the We Are Social report, the average time spent by Indonesians using TikTok is 23.1 hours per month. The time spent by Indonesians is very large, even exceeding the average time for using Tiktok in the world, which is 19.6 hours per month, and almost the same as the average time for using Youtube in the world, which is 23.7 hours per month.

The high intensity of using TikTok has made the social media application develop into popular culture. According to (Rakhmayanti, 2020). The tiktok application is dominated by teenagers aged 14-24 years who are called gen Y and Z. Furthermore (Omar, 2020) also mentions that the Tiktok application, which was launched in 2016 by Zhang Yiming, is a popular application and is in great demand for the current generation in 2020 because Short and unique video creation. Users can apply a variety of available features such as background music (background music), lipsync templates to communicate with fellow users, and are presented with a variety of interesting filters. The ease of internet access, the many facilities for editing photos and videos using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the abundance of interesting content as well as the large possibility for making viral videos, makes people even more interested in using the application from the Bamboo Curtain country.

TikTok provides a lot of content that entertains its users, so this application is generally used as a means of relieving fatigue and entertainment during free time in the midst of busyness or daily activities. The frequent use of this application to relieve fatigue and fatigue indicates that users often feel bored, tired and even tend to want to escape from the hustle and bustle of real-world activities through the content on TikTok, this escape is a form of self-defense mechanism. or defense mechanisms. When an individual tries to refuse to admit a situation that is uncomfortable and has occurred, but the individual is difficult to accept so denial of the situation and thinks as if there is no problem going on. The individual's response is a form of self-defense of denial carried out by the subconscious mind with the aim of protecting the individual from the pain of experiencing unwanted situations in his life (Susanto & Hambali, 2018).

Based on the background described above, the main problem in this research is how is TikTok's popular culture used as a form of denial by the Indonesian people?

## **Literature Review**

### **TikTok Popular Culture**

Popular Culture or so-called popular culture is a culture that is deliberately created by the mass media, when its creation is driven by profit motives and has the aim of overcoming people's boredom in their daily lives. In this case, the media acts as a management tool for popular culture. According to Gumelar (2017), that now the production of popular culture is created by the capitalist state. So it can be concluded that popular culture is a commercial culture that is supported by the movement of capitalism (mass media) and consumerism (society as recipients of mass media) in everyday life. One kind of popular culture is TikTok. The TikTok application is a short video platform with a short duration supported by music in the video. The characteristics of TikTok's popular culture are (Lubis, 2020): 1) Pragmatism, where TikTok's popular culture is measured by its benefits as entertainment regardless of the information presented, true or false. This is in accordance with the impact of popular culture which encourages the wearer to be lazy to think critically and tend to accept raw information; 2) Consumerism, where TikTok's popular culture is closely related to consumerism culture, namely people who constantly feel lacking and continuously dissatisfied.

TikTok is an application that provides special, unique and interesting effects that users of this application can easily use to create cool short videos that can attract the attention of many people who watch them. So, they tend to do everything possible so that the videos they make are watched by the public and compete to get praise. This time, TikTok has a new live video feature where viewers can give gifts that can be converted into rupiah, so that this application is in great demand among various groups; 3) Mass Culture, where popular culture is produced through mass production industrial techniques and marketed for profit from consumers; 4) Visual Culture, in which popular culture is related to visual culture because this culture prioritizes spectacles in the form of pictures and videos; 5) Style Culture, where visual

culture also produces style culture. The appearance or style that is exhibited is more important than the essence and meaning, as in the saying "I have style, then I exist".

### **Self-Defense Mechanism of Denial**

In psychology, rejection is called denial. Denial is a response caused by an individual due to a condition that is difficult to accept so that the individual tries to reject or deny it. This response is referred to as an individual defense mechanism in adapting to a condition that is being faced (Rahmi, 2018). The denial stage is the individual's first and temporary stage of feeling uncomfortable. Gradually this feeling will be replaced by a feeling of partial acceptance.

### **The Cause of the Self-Defense Mechanism of Denial**

Denial can occur when individuals try to refuse to admit an uncomfortable situation has occurred. When denial occurs, an individual will think that there is no problem going on. This is a form of self-protection (defense mechanism) by the subconscious mind with the aim of protecting individuals from the pain of experiencing unwanted situations in their lives (Susanto & Hambali, 2018). Factors that influence denial: 1) Gender, men tend to have the ability to think rationally. According to Rinaldi (2011), in his research he argued that in the structure of his brain, men have a higher attitude of optimism than women. This makes men have full confidence in their competence/ability to solve problems compared to women. Individuals with high resilience, namely men are able to adapt to various kinds of situations they are facing. Vice versa, individuals who have low resilience, namely women, tend to have difficulty adapting to various kinds of situations that do not make them comfortable, so women more often try to do self-defense (defense mechanisms) in the form of denial of problems and trauma so that their lives are not chaotic; 2) Education, the high level of education will affect the mindset of individuals, where the higher the level of thinking, the wider the way of thinking. Vice versa, individuals who have low education will have an impact on the development of their cognitive aspects, so that individuals tend to have irrational thoughts about the reality that is happening. This makes it difficult for individuals to control stressors (factors that cause stress responses); 3) Stress, stress can occur because of an imbalance between the ability to deal with pressure against the pressure that befalls him. the source of stress comes from the mind. Thus, individuals who often experience stress will tend to refuse. This is a form of self-protection (defense mechanism); 4) Self-assessment, a high level of negative self-assessment will lead individuals to self-denial. Feelings of inferiority and helplessness can result in feelings of uselessness in oneself and will lead to behavior that does not like socializing or isolating

oneself. Vice versa, if individuals have positive feelings they will tend to develop self-confidence and try to accept the inconvenience of the situation they receive.

## **Method**

The research method used is library research. This literature study method is research by analyzing several relevant reference sources to find scientific studies (Justice & Hasanudin, 2022). According to Adlini et al (2022), the library research method is a method of collecting data by understanding and studying theories from various literature related to this research. There are four stages in conducting this literature study, namely preparing the necessary equipment, preparing a work bibliography, organizing time and reading or recording research material. This method is carried out by collecting theoretical sources that are in accordance with the use of Tiktok as a denial defense mechanism.

This study uses secondary data, namely data collection techniques by taking data that has been collected by other people. Secondary data in this study are in the form of library materials obtained through articles, journals and literature books that are considered relevant. Library materials which have been obtained from various reference sources, are then analyzed critically and in depth.

## **Results and Discussion**

A person's tendency to refuse to acknowledge the painful reality that is happening to him or her is a denial of self-defense mechanism to avoid anxiety. This self-defense mechanism is a strategy for overcoming a feeling of depression. Denial that occurs can be in the form of denial about the reality that is happening and the consequences of that fact.

According to Husna (2021), when this self-defense mechanism of denial is carried out, it means that a person is struggling to accept by going through the process of being rejected many times in the early stages of something that is very hard for him and causes stress. In the short term, this denial can be useful for a person to adjust to the reality of experiencing big changes that occur suddenly. But denial in the long term can cause serious problems in life, especially if a person fails or is unable to overcome the problem or cannot make the necessary changes to create a better condition.

The concept of denial was first coined by Sigmund Freud, where Freud described it as a denial of disappointing facts as a result of internal and external events including memories, thoughts and feelings. Freud's theory clearly explains self-defense mechanisms as a form of the individual's unconscious in dealing with reality (Sanyata, 2009). There are several general

signs that someone will use self-defense mechanisms, namely 1) Refusing to talk about the problem; 2) Trying to find ways to justify the behavior being performed; 3) Blaming other people or external factors as the cause of the problem can occur; 4) Promise to solve the problem in the future; 6) Trying to persist in a behavior even though there are negative consequences; 7) Procrastinating to think about the problem. At a more advanced level, a person experiencing denial knows that the problem needs to be dealt with immediately, but also feels powerless to do something to make a difference. When the other party tries to offer real help or advice, the person experiencing the problem will ignore it by pretending to agree or even telling the other party to mind his own business. This relates to the human cognitive performance system. Where the brain part of the limbic system plays an important role in controlling and processing emotions. The limbic system has four parts: the hypothalamus, hippocampus, amygdala and limbic cortex. In someone who has a burden or problem that leads to anxiety, it causes the amygdala to stimulate the hypothalamus which results in an individual's tendency to fight or reject by diverting to something that makes him feel safe, comfortable, and easy to reach quickly to divert his negative emotions. This correlates with the high activity of TikTok users.

In Figure 1, it can be seen that the social media application Tiktok leads in the use of the average time spent globally, namely for 95 minutes per day during the second quarter of 2022 (Chan, 2022). This is more than four times the average duration spent on snapchat which is 21 minutes and more than three times the time spent on Twitter which is 29 minutes and almost double Facebook which is 49 minutes and Instagram 51 minutes, while YouTube gets the average time the second highest spent daily in 2022 is 74 minutes.

This self-defense mechanism of denial certainly requires a strategy, namely where to go to escape as a form of denial or denial of the serious problem that is being faced so that stress does not arise. A place of escape should be able to make a person more comfortable with himself. Using the TikTok application is something that is comfortable when someone experiences discomfort due to the problems they face. In research conducted by Hajriah et al (2021), the results showed that apart from being used as a medium of entertainment and creativity, the TikTok application is also used as a diversion or channel of emotions when experiencing pressure or stress. Similar research was also conducted by Husodo et al (2021) which found that respondents vented their stress through social media activities by watching videos. At high stress levels, social media utilization is much higher than at other stress levels. The research conducted by Husodo et al can be said to strengthen the research conducted by

Hajriah et al where TikTok is an application that provides short video content that attracts users to watch for a long time.

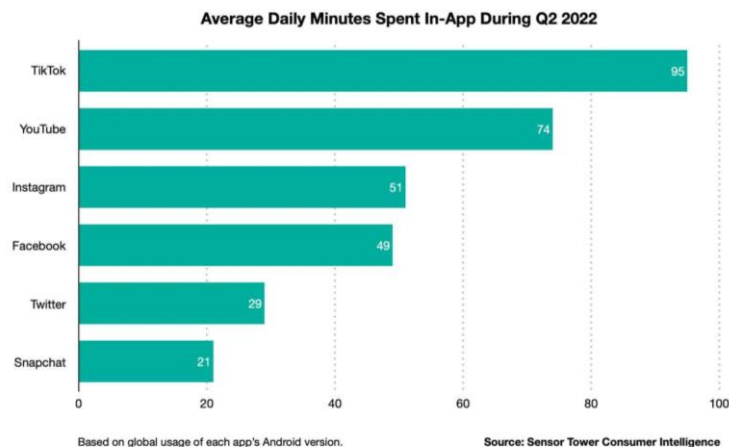


Figure 1 average daily minutes spent in app

TikTok application users often use TikTok as a means of entertainment, diversion or channeling negative emotions when they feel pressured by the reality that is happening. This is in accordance with the concept of defense mechanism denial coined by Sigmund Freud, where TikTok users tend to try to persist in a behavior such as lingering watching TikTok videos even though there are negative consequences that will arise.

Running away from denial for too long will have an impact on the emergence of new problems and be dangerous for yourself. Instead of relieving stress, excessive use of social media TikTok can exacerbate stress levels and decrease memory in the brain. Researchers Sha and Dong (2021) conducted a study that aimed to examine the mediating effects of depression, anxiety and stress between TikTok user disorder (TTUD) and memory loss or memory loss, which was focused on adolescents and divided by gender. The research was conducted on 3036 first and second graders of senior high schools (SMA) in China. The results of the research conducted by Sha and Dong said that the use disorder of TikTok (TTUD) in women is higher than that of men, the use disorder of TikTok has a positive relationship with memory loss, depression, anxiety, and stress. This is in accordance with research according to Rinaldi (2011) which argues that resilience or the ability to survive and adapt to something that puts pressure on men is higher than women, so women tend to do self-defense of denial.

The handling of denial cases usually depends on the type and magnitude of the problem being faced. Support groups in the surrounding environment or through counseling can help someone to get out of a denial situation. Learning to identify the forms of denial that occur can



help increase self-awareness in understanding their own behavior. According to Husna (2021), when someone considers denial to be a coping stress, then there are several things that can be done to help overcome it, namely 1) Think about why you are afraid to face this problem; 2) Consider the consequences if you don't/delay dealing with the problem; 3) Try to talk to a close friend or loved one who might be able to provide honest and objective advice or perspectives; and 4) Trying to identify distorted thoughts that may have a major influence on anxiety.

## Conclusion

The TikTok application contains a variety of interesting video content that can relieve stress due to the problems at hand. Someone will tend to try to satisfy their needs by avoiding something that is unpleasant and toward or approach something that is fun. This action is part of the human self-defense mechanism in terms of denial. Using the TikTok application is something that is comfortable when someone experiences discomfort. Thus, the self-defense mechanism of denial through social media TikTok is one's strategy in managing stress levels due to the problems being faced. However, running away from denial for too long will have an impact on the emergence of new and dangerous problems for yourself. Instead of relieving stress, excessive use of social media TikTok can exacerbate stress levels and decrease memory in the brain. Thus, the researcher hopes to provide motivation in overcoming the excessive use of TikTok as a denial self-defense mechanism that the researcher has described in the research results.

## References

- Aditya, M. (2023, Januari 18). *Indonesia Jadi Negara Pengguna TikTok Terbanyak ke-2 di Dunia*. From GoodStats: Di Akses Melalui : <https://goodstats.id/infographic/indonesia-jadi-negara-pengguna-tiktok-terbanyak-ke-2-di-dunia-P5Hi2>
- Adlini, M., Dinda, A., Yulinda, S., Chotimah, O., & Merliyana, S. (2022). Metode penelitian kualitatif studi pustaka. *Jurnal Edumaspul*, 6(1), 974-980.
- Chan, S. (2022, July). *Nearly One-Third of TikTok's Installed Base Uses the App Every Day*. Diambil kembali dari Sensor Tower: Diakses melalui : <https://sensortower.com/blog/tiktok-power-user-curve>
- Gumelar, M. S. (2017). Industri budaya dan kontes 0restige: terpinggirnya pemuatan laporan penelitian di jurnal yang tidak terindeks scopus di Indonesia. *Jurnal Studi Kultural*, 2(1), 29-32.
- Hajriah, Suryani, A., Sari, L., & Rahmah, D. (2021). Gambaran strategi coping mahasiswa pengguna aplikasi Tik Tok yang menjalani social distancing wabah Covid-19. *Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi*, 9(3), 685-691.
- Husna, R. (2021, Desember 16). *Penolakan (Denial) sebagai Mekanisme Pertahanan Diri*. From Materi Konseling: Di akses melalui : <https://www.materikonseling.com/2021/12/penolakan-denial-sebagai-mekanisme.html>
- Husodo, B., Amelia, F., & Handayani, N. (2021). Strategi coping stress melalui media sosial pada remaja di kota Semarang. *Jurnal Media Kesehatan Masyarakat Indonesia*, 20(5), 327-333.



- Justice, B., & Hasanudin, C. (2022). Menyiapkan pendidik profesional dengan program smart society 5.0 untuk mewujudkan generasi Indonesia Emas tahun 2045. *Prosiding Senada*, 2(1), 20-26.
- Lubis, S. (2020). Media komik sebagai sarana meningkatkan kemampuan menulis. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia*, 5(1), 156-166.
- Omar, B. (2020). The Influence of Personality Traits and User Motivation on TikTok Mobile Video Usage. *Universitas Sains Malaysia*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3991/ijim.v14i04.12429>
- Rahmi, H. (2018). *Buku Pintar Membaca Karakter Lewat Tulisan Tangan*. Yogyakarta: Psikologi Corner.
- Rakhmayanti, I. (2020, November). Pengguna TikTok di Indonesia Didominasi Generasi Z dan Y. [www.sindonews.com](http://www.sindonews.com). From <https://tekno.sindonews.com/berita/1523692/207/pengguna-tiktok-di-indonesia-didominasi-generasi-z-dan-y>
- Rinaldi. (2011). Resiliensi pada masyarakat kota Padang ditinjau dari jenis kelamin. *Jurnal Psikologi*, 3 (2).
- Sanyata, S. (2009). Mekanisme dan taktik bertahan: Penolakan realita dalam konseling. *Paradigma*, 4(8), 35-44.
- Sha, P., & Dong, X. (2021). Research on adolescents regarding the indirect effect of depression, anxiety, and stress between Tiktok use disorder and memory loss. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18 (16),
- Susanto, A., & Hambali, A. (2018). *E.R.A.S.E Therapy : Emotions Release And Awareness Ascension*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Utami, A., & Baiti, N. (2018). Pengaruh media sosial terhadap perilaku cyberbullying pada kalangan remaja. *Jurnal Humaniora*, 257-262.
- We Are Social, & Hootsuite. (2022, Januari 26). *Digital 2022: Another Year of Bumper Growth*. From We Are Social: di Akses melalui : <https://wearesocial.com/us/blog/2022/01/digital-2022-another-year-of-bumper-growth-2/>