

The Influence of Journalistic Content on TikTok on Generation Z's Online News Consumption Preferences

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of social media has transformed the way Generation Z accesses and consumes news. Among various digital platforms, TikTok has emerged as an alternative source of information due to its visual, interactive, and user-centered features. This study aims to examine the influence of TikTok journalism content on Generation Z's online news consumption preferences in Garut Regency, Indonesia. A quantitative approach was employed using a survey method involving 41 Generation Z respondents who actively use TikTok and consume news content through the platform. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling. The independent variable was TikTok journalism content, measured through information quality, news presentation attractiveness, and interactivity, while the dependent variable was online news consumption preference, measured through frequency and motivation. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, validity and normality tests, and simple linear regression analysis. The findings reveal that TikTok journalism content has a positive and statistically significant influence on Generation Z's online news consumption preferences ($\beta = 0.450$, $p = .003$). The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .202$) indicates that TikTok journalism content explains 20.2% of the variance in online news consumption preferences. Creatively presented news content and interactive platform features contribute to increasing Generation Z's engagement with online news, although concerns regarding information quality and credibility remain. These findings suggest that TikTok functions not only as an entertainment platform but also as an important supplementary medium for news dissemination among young audiences. Improving the quality and credibility of journalism content on TikTok may further enhance Generation Z's preference for consuming online news, although other factors beyond the scope of this study also influence news consumption behavior.

Keywords: TikTok journalism; Generation Z; online news consumption; social media; news preferences.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology and social media has fundamentally transformed the ways people access and consume information. This transformation is particularly evident among Generation Z, a demographic group characterized by high digital literacy and intensive social media use. Unlike previous generations, Generation Z tends to prefer information that is visual, concise, interactive, and available in real time. According to the *Digital News Report 2024* published by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, approximately 54% of internet users worldwide access news through social media platforms, with younger audiences relying more heavily on social media than on traditional news media (Newman et al, 2024). These changes indicate a significant shift in news consumption patterns among young people.

Among social media platforms, TikTok has emerged as one of the most influential applications in shaping information behavior. Initially developed as an entertainment platform, TikTok has evolved into an alternative source of information and news dissemination. Through its short-form video format and algorithm-driven recommendations, TikTok allows news

content to be delivered quickly and attractively. Consequently, journalists and media organizations increasingly utilize TikTok to present information in visual and interactive forms that are more appealing to younger audiences. However, concerns have also emerged regarding the quality and credibility of information on the platform because algorithmic systems frequently prioritize engagement and content virality over journalistic verification and accuracy (Kaye, D. B. V., Chen, X., & Zeng, 2021).

In Indonesia, digital transformation has accelerated the adoption of social-media-based information consumption. The Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) reported that internet penetration reached 79.5% of the total population in 2024, equivalent to approximately 221.56 million users (APJII, 2024). Moreover, the *Digital 2025: Indonesia* report revealed that TikTok has become one of the most popular social media platforms among users aged 18–24 years, who predominantly belong to Generation Z (We Are Social & Meltwater, 2025). At the regional level, Garut Regency in West Java represents an appropriate setting for investigating this phenomenon because a considerable proportion of its population consists of young people with increasing internet accessibility and social media engagement.

Previous studies have demonstrated the growing role of TikTok in influencing information-seeking behavior and news consumption patterns among younger audiences. Kaye found that TikTok's visual and interactive characteristics significantly affect users' engagement with information content (Zeng & Kaye, 2022). Furthermore, recent studies have indicated that intensive exposure to short-form videos influences users' preferences for concise and entertaining information formats. Nevertheless, empirical studies specifically examining the influence of TikTok-based journalism on Generation Z's online news consumption preferences in local Indonesian contexts remain limited.

This study is grounded in the *Uses and Gratifications Theory*, which posits that individuals actively select social media platforms to satisfy their informational, communication, and social interaction needs. In the context of Generation Z, TikTok serves as a medium that enables users to obtain information in an interactive and easily accessible manner (Yessi Mareta Andari Putri, 2026). In addition, the *MAIN Model* (*Modality, Agency, Interactivity, and Navigability*) is employed to explain how digital media affordances shape user engagement and media preferences (Sundar, 2020). Using a quantitative approach, this study aims to analyze the influence of journalism content on TikTok on Generation Z's online news consumption preferences in Garut Regency.

The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on TikTok as an emerging journalism platform and its examination of Generation Z within a local Indonesian context. While previous studies have predominantly explored social media use at the national level or focused on other platforms, this study provides empirical evidence regarding the relationship between TikTok-based journalism and online news consumption preferences among young audiences in Garut Regency. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of digital journalism studies and provide recommendations for enhancing media literacy and the credibility of news content on social media platforms.

2. METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach using a descriptive-correlational research design. The quantitative approach was selected to examine the relationship between TikTok journalism content and Generation Z's preferences for consuming online news through numerical measurements and statistical analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The descriptive-correlational design was used to identify and describe patterns of online news consumption and to determine the extent to which journalism content on TikTok influences these preferences among Generation Z.

The study was conducted in Garut Regency, West Java, Indonesia. The target population consisted of Generation Z individuals who actively use TikTok and consume news content through the platform. A non-probability sampling technique, specifically purposive sampling, was employed because respondents were selected based on predetermined criteria relevant to the objectives of the study (Uma Sekaran and Roger Bougie, 2020). The inclusion criteria were as follows: (1) individuals aged between 13 and 28 years, representing the Generation Z cohort; (2) residents of Garut Regency; (3) active TikTok users; and (4) individuals who access or consume online news through TikTok. Based on these criteria, a total of 41 respondents participated in the study.

Data were collected through an online questionnaire administered using Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of structured statements developed from previous studies on digital journalism, social media engagement, and online news consumption behavior. The independent variable, TikTok Journalism Content (X), was measured through three dimensions: Information Quality, News Presentation Attractiveness, and Interactivity. The dependent variable, Generation Z's Preference for Consuming Online News (Y), was measured through two dimensions: Frequency and Motivation. All questionnaire items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

The research procedure consisted of four stages. First, indicators and questionnaire items were developed based on relevant literature and the research objectives. Second, the questionnaire was distributed online to respondents who met the inclusion criteria. Third, responses were screened to ensure data completeness and suitability with the predetermined criteria. Finally, the collected data were coded and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to examine the relationship between the research variables.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the findings, standardized measurement procedures and structured data collection techniques were employed throughout the study. The use of explicit sampling criteria, clearly defined variables, and systematic analytical procedures enables future researchers to replicate the study in similar contexts and compare findings across different populations and geographical settings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Respondents' Responses to TikTok Journalism Content (X)

The independent variable, TikTok Journalism Content (X), was measured using three dimensions: Information Quality, News Presentation Attractiveness, and Interactivity. The

descriptive analysis was conducted to determine respondents' perceptions of journalism content presented on TikTok.

Table 1. Recapitulation of Respondents' Responses to TikTok Journalism Content (X)

Indicator	Total Score	Mean Score	Category
Information Quality	486	2.96	Moderate
News Presentation Attractiveness	704	3.43	Good
Interactivity	483	3.93	Good
Overall	1,673	3.40	Moderate

Source: Research Findings (2025).

As shown in Table 1, the overall mean score of the TikTok Journalism Content variable was 3.40, indicating a moderate perception of journalism content on TikTok among Generation Z respondents in Garut Regency. Among the three dimensions, Interactivity received the highest mean score ($M = 3.93$), suggesting that respondents highly appreciated participatory features such as likes, comments, shares, duet, stitch, and Q&A. News Presentation Attractiveness also received positive evaluations ($M = 3.43$), indicating that visual elements, storytelling techniques, and video editing contribute to audience engagement. In contrast, Information Quality obtained the lowest mean score ($M = 2.96$), reflecting respondents' concerns regarding the credibility, accuracy, and reliability of information disseminated through TikTok.

These findings indicate that TikTok's strengths as a journalism platform lie primarily in its interactive and visually appealing characteristics. However, issues related to information quality remain an important challenge for journalists and news organizations seeking to maintain public trust in digital news environments.

Respondents' Responses to Generation Z's Online News Consumption Preferences (Y)

The dependent variable, Generation Z's Preference for Consuming Online News (Y), was measured through two dimensions: Frequency and Motivation.

Table 2. Recapitulation of Respondents' Responses to Generation Z's Online News Consumption Preferences (Y)

Indicator	Total Score	Mean Score	Category
Frequency	407	3.31	Moderate
Motivation	734	3.58	Good
Overall	1,141	3.48	Good

Source: Research Findings (2025).

Table 2 shows that the overall mean score for Generation Z's online news consumption preferences was 3.48, which falls within the good category. The Motivation dimension received the highest evaluation ($M = 3.58$), indicating that respondents are motivated to consume news through TikTok because of its accessibility, convenience, and rapid information delivery. Meanwhile, the Frequency dimension obtained a moderate score ($M = 3.31$), suggesting that although respondents regularly encounter news content on TikTok, they do not rely exclusively on the platform as their primary news source.

The findings imply that Generation Z considers TikTok an important supplementary source of information rather than a complete substitute for conventional news media or other online information sources.

Validity and Normality Test Results

The validity test was conducted to determine whether the questionnaire items adequately measured the constructs under investigation. Items with correlation coefficients greater than the critical value ($r\text{-table} = 0.308$) were considered valid and retained for analysis, whereas items below this threshold were excluded.

The normality assumption was evaluated using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residuals. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test produced an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.200, which exceeded the significance level of 0.05. Moreover, the residual points in the P-P Plot followed the diagonal line without substantial deviations. These findings indicate that the data were normally distributed and satisfied the assumptions required for linear regression analysis.

Hypothesis Testing and Regression Analysis

Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of TikTok Journalism Content (X) on Generation Z's Preference for Consuming Online News (Y). The analysis yielded a regression coefficient of $B = 0.351$, a t-value of 3.143, and a significance value of 0.003.

Because the significance value was lower than the predetermined threshold of 0.05, the research hypothesis was accepted. The findings indicate that TikTok journalism content has a positive and statistically significant influence on Generation Z's preferences for consuming online news. Specifically, every one-unit increase in the quality of TikTok journalism content was associated with a 0.351-unit increase in respondents' preferences for consuming online news.

The standardized regression coefficient ($Beta = 0.450$) indicates a moderate positive relationship between the two variables. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.202$) demonstrates that TikTok journalism content explained 20.2% of the variance in Generation Z's online news consumption preferences, while the remaining 79.8% was

influenced by factors outside the scope of this study. The ANOVA results also confirmed that the regression model was statistically significant ($F = 9.876$, $p = 0.003$).

Discussion

The findings of this study support the *Uses and Gratifications Theory* (UGT), which posits that individuals actively select and use media to satisfy specific needs, including information seeking, entertainment, and social interaction (Damanik et al., 2022; Hu et al., 2024). The positive and statistically significant effect of TikTok journalism content on Generation Z's preferences for consuming online news indicates that TikTok has become an important medium for fulfilling these needs through its accessible, interactive, and visually engaging characteristics.

The descriptive results showed that the Interactivity dimension received the highest evaluation among respondents. This finding suggests that participatory features such as likes, comments, shares, duet, stitch, and Q&A encourage audience engagement and facilitate information exchange among users. These features transform users from passive recipients of information into active participants in the communication process. Similarly, the positive evaluation of News Presentation Attractiveness indicates that concise videos, visual storytelling techniques, and multimedia elements make news content easier to understand and more appealing to Generation Z audiences. Such characteristics are consistent with the preferences of younger users, who tend to favor short, visually rich, and interactive forms of information delivery.

However, Information Quality received the lowest mean score among the three dimensions. This result indicates that respondents still express concerns regarding the credibility, accuracy, and reliability of news disseminated through TikTok. Although TikTok effectively attracts audience attention and facilitates rapid information dissemination, maintaining journalistic standards remains essential for strengthening public trust in digital news content. Consequently, news organizations and journalists should prioritize information verification and ethical reporting practices while adapting content to platform-specific characteristics.

The present findings are consistent with previous studies. Kaye argued that TikTok's recommendation algorithm and short-video format significantly influence users' information consumption behavior by increasing accessibility and engagement with digital content (Zeng & Kaye, 2022). Likewise, Hu et al. (2022) found that Generation Z actively uses social media platforms to satisfy informational and communication needs and prefers media that provide convenient and interactive experiences. In the Indonesian context, Damanik and Tambotoh (2022) reported that social media users deliberately select platforms that efficiently facilitate information seeking, communication, and social interaction.

Furthermore, the regression analysis revealed that TikTok journalism content explained 20.2% of the variance in Generation Z's preferences for consuming online news. Although this effect was statistically significant, a substantial proportion of the variance remained unexplained, indicating that other factors, such as digital literacy, trust in media, individual interests, and peer influence, may also contribute to online news consumption behavior. Therefore, future studies should incorporate additional variables to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of Generation Z's news consumption patterns.

Overall, this study demonstrates that TikTok has emerged as an important platform for news dissemination among Generation Z in Garut Regency. Nevertheless, digital news organizations should balance attractive and interactive content strategies with the principles of accuracy, credibility, and journalistic integrity to maintain audience trust and improve the quality of information distributed through social media platforms.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study indicate that TikTok journalism content has a positive and statistically significant influence on Generation Z's preferences for consuming online news in Garut Regency. The dimensions of Information Quality, News Presentation Attractiveness, and Interactivity contribute to shaping how Generation Z perceives, evaluates, and engages with online news content. Among these dimensions, Interactivity and News Presentation Attractiveness received the highest evaluations, suggesting that participatory features and visually engaging presentations make TikTok an appealing platform for accessing information.

The results further demonstrate that TikTok has become an important supplementary source of news for Generation Z. The platform's interactive features and accessible short-video format increase users' motivation to consume news and encourage active engagement with information. However, the relatively lower evaluation of Information Quality indicates that concerns regarding credibility, accuracy, and reliability of news content on TikTok remain significant issues. Therefore, although TikTok effectively attracts young audiences, maintaining journalistic standards and information verification practices is essential for strengthening public trust in digital news content.

Regression analysis showed that TikTok journalism content explained 20.2% of the variance in Generation Z's preferences for consuming online news. This finding suggests that TikTok journalism content plays an important role in influencing news consumption behavior, although other factors beyond the scope of this study also substantially contribute to shaping these preferences.

Based on these findings, digital news organizations and journalists are encouraged to develop content strategies that combine attractive visual presentations and interactive features with the principles of accuracy, credibility, and journalistic integrity. Such efforts may enhance audience engagement while simultaneously improving trust in news content distributed through social media platforms.

Research Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be acknowledged in this study. First, the study involved a relatively small sample of 41 respondents, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader Generation Z population. Second, the use of purposive sampling may reduce the representativeness of the sample and increase the possibility of sampling bias. Third, the study was conducted exclusively in Garut Regency; therefore, the findings may not fully represent the news consumption behavior of Generation Z in regions with different social, cultural, and technological characteristics.

Furthermore, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.202$) indicates that 79.8% of the variance in Generation Z's online news consumption preferences is explained by factors not

examined in this study. Variables such as digital literacy, trust in digital media, peer influence, educational background, and exposure to other social media platforms may also influence online news consumption behavior.

Future research is recommended to employ larger and more representative samples, utilize probability sampling techniques, and incorporate additional explanatory variables to improve the predictive power of the research model. Comparative studies across different regions and demographic groups may also provide a broader understanding of the role of social media journalism in shaping online news consumption preferences among Generation Z.

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