From Scrolling to Studying: The Role of TikTok Content in Enhancing Learning Interest and Its Implications for Educational Management in The Digital Economy Era

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Abstract

This study explores the role of TikTok content in transforming students' digital habits, "from scrolling to studying," and its implications for educational management in the digital economy. Conducted at UPT SMAN 4 Wajo, the research focused on Grade XII students and employed a qualitative method with Miles & Huberman's interactive analysis technique. The sample consisted of 32 students whose use of TikTok was examined in relation to their learning interests. The findings reveal that creatively presented TikTok content—through filters, music, modes, and diverse material—significantly enhances students' interest in learning. Students reported feeling less bored, more engaged, and enthusiastic when encountering material delivered in unique ways, and they were also able to download useful content as additional learning resources. These results indicate that TikTok is not only a platform for entertainment but also a relevant educational management strategy to foster learning interest, positioning it as a valuable tool in navigating the challenges and opportunities of the digital economy.

Keywords: *Digital Economy, Educational Management, Social Media Content, TikTok.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is a directed process that requires effective strategies to create meaningful learning experiences. One of the key factors influencing student engagement is learning interest (Addai-Mununkum, 2023; Friales et al., 2022; Lestari & Mokhammad, 2017). In the context of educational management, innovation is needed to integrate digital technology developments into the learning process, particularly in today's digital economy era, where patterns of information consumption, learning approaches, and 21st-century skills are increasingly dependent on the use of technology.

TikTok, as a global social media platform, possesses significant pedagogical potential (Escamilla-Fajardo et al., 2021) and has been proven to enhance academic performance through microlearning strategies (Cabero-Almenara et al., 2024). Content packaged with filters, music, and creative variations has been shown to make students more motivated and less bored (Fernandez & Ramos, 2023; RSIS International, 2022).

Furthermore, educational content on TikTok supports foreign language comprehension (Rahman & Sari, 2022), strengthens learning engagement (Nuraini & Hidayat, 2023), and contributes to the formation of adolescents' social values (Zhang & Wang, 2024). From the perspective of learning media management, it is essential to manage digital content in a directed way so that positive impacts are more dominant (Darmawan & Rukmana, 2023).

However, studies also warn that social media algorithms can trigger distractions (Hern, 2024), making content selection an important part of educational policy. On the other hand, the dissemination of STEM content on social media indicates that popularity and interactivity strongly influence learning engagement (Dong & Liu, 2024).

This phenomenon is also evident at UPT SMAN 4 Wajo, a senior high school in Wajo Regency, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia, where 12th-grade students actively use TikTok both as an entertainment and learning medium. With proper management, TikTok has the potential to become a relevant educational management strategy to foster learning interest among digital generation students while addressing the challenges of learning in the digital economy era.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research method using Miles & Huberman's interactive analysis technique. The research sample consisted of 32 twelfth-grade students from UPT SMAN 4 Wajo, focusing on their use of social media content in relation to their learning interests. Data were collected through observation, online interviews using Google Forms, and documentary analysis of TikTok content related to learning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Respondent Classification

Based on the results of the online interview data collection using Google Forms, 32 responses were obtained. A total of 17 male students participated in this study as subjects or respondents, while 15 female students were identified as participants. The number of students who were willing to participate as subjects/respondents in this study consisted of 8 students aged 17 years, 20 students aged 18 years, and 4 students aged 19 years.

1. Have you ever intentionally used TikTok social media content as learning material at school? If so, in what way?
2. Do you like the learning content presented on TikTok social media? Why?
3. To what extent do you think TikTok social media content is beneficial in relation to school learning? What does it look like?
4. Have you ever created content on TikTok in the form of learning tutorials, such as quick calculations in Microsoft Excel? If yes, please provide an example.
5. Do you think learning content on TikTok is interesting enough? Why?
6. Have you ever practiced TikTok social media content for school learning? Please provide an example?
7. Has your teacher ever assigned tasks in the form of social media content? What was it like?

Table of Interview Result Interpretation

No.	Questions	Main Respondent Answer	Meaning/Implication
1.	Have you ever intentionally used TikTok social media content as learning material at school? If so, in what way?	The majority have, for example, looking for references for paintings, Excel tables, etc.	TikTok can be utilized as a learning resource if used wisely.
2.	Do you like the learning content presented on TikTok social media? Why?	Yes, because it is creative (music, filters, content), easy to understand, and repeatable.	Creative content encourages student interest and simplifies understanding.
3.	To what extent do you think TikTok social media content is beneficial in relation to school learning? What does it look like?	Many benefits: tutorials, tips, helping complete assignments, and increasing curiosity.	TikTok functions as an alternative learning medium.
4.	Have you ever created content on TikTok in the form of learning tutorials, such as quick calculations in Microsoft Excel? If yes, please provide an example.	The majority have not, due to academic workload.	Students focus more on formal studies; creating content is not yet a priority.
5.	Do you think learning content on TikTok is interesting enough? Why?	Yes, unique variation, accompanied by explanatory text.	Engaging content can increase concentration and interest in learning.
6.	Have you ever practiced TikTok social media content for school learning? Please provide an example.	A small portion has (painting, math formulas, MS Word); some only watch.	TikTok is more of an additional insight, not yet fully applied.
7.	Has your teacher ever assigned tasks in the form of social media content? What was it like?	Answers are divided: some have, some have not.	Teacher innovation plays an important role in utilizing social media for learning.

1. TikTok can be utilized as a learning resource if used wisely

   The TikTok platform has significant educational potential. Wise use allows students to utilize it for searching specific references, such as paintings, data tables (Excel), or other supporting information. This indicates that TikTok's role extends beyond entertainment and can be integrated as an aid in the learning process.

2. Creative content encourages student interest and simplifies understanding

   The content presentation style on TikTok, which involves creative elements like music, filters, and short visual formats, is proven effective in capturing students' attention. Content that is creatively packaged and easy to understand is very important because it can directly increase students' motivation to learn and help them digest complex material.

3. TikTok functions as an alternative learning medium

   The large number of respondents who feel the benefits of TikTok for academic purposes, such as getting tutorials, tips for completing assignments, and increasing curiosity, confirms its role. TikTok is not only seen as a leisure tool but also as a valid and relevant resource, serving as a supplement or replacement for traditional learning resources.

4. Students focus more on formal studies; creating content is not yet a priority

   Although using TikTok as a consumer of educational content, the majority of students have not utilized it to produce their own learning content. This is due to the students' workload and main focus being on formal study obligations and academic targets. The potential of students as creators and peer teachers through digital platforms has not been maximally explored.

5. Engaging content can increase concentration and interest in learning

   The visual quality and unique variation that accompany learning content on TikTok (including explanatory text) directly contribute to learning effectiveness. Visually engaging and informative material will help students maintain concentration longer and naturally increase their interest in the subject being studied.

6. TikTok is more of an additional insight, not yet fully applied

   The use of TikTok for learning practice (such as painting or mathematical formulas) is still carried out by a small portion of respondents. This indicates that although TikTok provides additional insights, its integration into the curriculum or students' daily practice is still ad-hoc and not yet structured. The implementation of this platform as a planned learning tool still needs to be improved.

7. Teacher innovation plays an important role in utilizing social media for learning

   The divided answers regarding the assignment to create social media content indicate initiative from some teachers to experiment with digital teaching methods. Innovation from educators is the main key to bridging social media (which is close to students' lives) with academic goals, thereby ensuring the relevance of learning in the digital era.

Interpretation

The research findings show that the majority of twelfth-grade students at UPT SMAN 4 Wajo have utilized TikTok content as a learning resource, such as searching for assignment references or following Microsoft Excel tutorials. They enjoyed this learning content because it was creatively presented through filters, music, and varied formats that were easy to understand and could be replayed multiple times. This demonstrates that TikTok not only functions as an entertainment medium but can also serve as an effective alternative learning tool when managed within the framework of educational management.

These findings are consistent with a systematic review conducted by Escamilla-Fajardo, Alguacil, and López-Carril (2021), which revealed that TikTok can enhance student engagement and knowledge retention through short, creative content. Further, Gómez and Vargas (2023) emphasized that the use of TikTok significantly influences academic performance, particularly when content is delivered in an interactive microlearning format. Similarly, a study by Sharma and Gupta (2022) showed that students are more interested and focused on TikTok-based learning compared to traditional methods.

However, research has also warned of the risks of distraction and ineffective time use. For example, a study by Khan and Siddiqui (2021) in Pakistan reported that more than 40% of students felt TikTok could interfere with their study time. Moreover, Borrás-Gené, Martínez-Núñez, and Fidalgo-Blanco (2021) highlighted that TikTok has the potential to strengthen

active learning and peer-to-peer learning through short visual videos, although it still requires guidance from educators to align with learning objectives.

Thus, the local findings in Wajo reinforce global evidence that the integration of creative social media such as TikTok, when properly managed within educational management, can enhance students' learning interest while minimizing potential negative risks. More importantly, in the context of the digital economy era, these findings highlight the necessity for educational institutions to adapt and optimize digital platforms not only as pedagogical tools but also as strategic resources to equip students with relevant skills for a technology-driven society.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that TikTok can be utilized as an alternative learning medium when managed within the framework of educational management. For teachers, creative content such as lesson summaries or tutorials can attract students' interest without reducing the substance of learning. At the school level, internal policies, digital literacy training, and social media usage guidelines aligned with educational goals are required, reflecting the functions of planning, organizing, and controlling. Students also need to be guided to selectively choose educational content while being empowered as content creators to strengthen peer learning. For policymakers, the integration of social media into technology-based learning strategies should be accompanied by teacher training, the reinforcement of digital literacy curricula, and continuous evaluation. Thus, educational management plays a crucial role in ensuring that the use of TikTok has a positive impact on enhancing learning interest while minimizing the risks of distraction. In addition, within the context of the digital economy era, the use of TikTok as a learning medium highlights the importance of equipping students with not only academic knowledge but also digital competencies, creativity, and adaptability that are essential for competing and contributing in a technology-driven society.

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