



Uses and Gratification Theory in TikTok as Social Media Marketing Platform: Seen from Market Player View

Praventyasari Mutiara, Kinkin Yuliaty Subarsa Putri*

Department of Communication Science, Faculty of Social Science, Universitas Negeri Jakarta

*Correspondence: kinkinubarsa@unj.ac.id

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ABSTRACT: This study aimed to understand the relationship between social media users and content using the use and gratification theories. It is also written to apprehend one of many communication theories, which includes mass communication theory and uses and gratification theory. This theory studies the reasons why people use social media platforms to create brand awareness and why they choose a particular platform to promote their brand awareness. The research methodology used in this study was descriptive qualitative. The author took samples from TikTok users who use social media to create brand awareness using the use and gratification theories. The research used two types of accumulation data technique (ADT), which are online desk research by interview and online desk research. TikTok was the mass media used for this research. The results show why TikTok is chosen as the best mass medium for creating brand awareness based on the uses and gratification theory. In conclusion, TikTok meets the qualifications for social media marketing to create brand awareness based on the uses and gratification theory.

KEYWORDS: Uses and gratification; TikTok; brand awareness; marketing

1. Introduction

As the internet developed, human life became much easier than ever before. On the internet, media showed its progress in the new era, known as new media. In relation to human life, which desired everything to be easier, faster, and smarter, new media became the long-awaited answer. The use of media as a marketing medium had been around for a long time [1]. In the history of advertising that used the media, Egypt was the first country to use papyrus media to find the whereabouts of missing people in 3000 BC. Advertisement programs were not stopping yet, but still developing through technology development. Advertising media changed from a sheet of paper to newspaper copies; from newspaper copies to a radio; from a radio to a moving picture, which is called television, which remained popular until now. Television was a popular advertising medium for introducing brands to the public. In the year 2021, RCTI (one of Indonesia's television stations) got the highest rank at 25.1% because of *Ikatan Cinta* impressions.

Along with the popularity of television, social media appeared. Social media is a part of the internet used for communicating and creating new interactions with other people all over the world. Social media looks like another universe where people can chat, send pictures or

videos, share ideas, and do many other things. Social media popularity increased fast through easily used media that are very effective, time-saving, low-priced, or even free. Social media can be used by various circles, and in the next paragraph, researchers talked about how social media development could increase faster in society. The first social media platform used and went viral was Friendster. Friendster was founded by Jonathan Abrams in 2002 and launched in 2003. Did they have many users? Yes, at that time when the internet was not really popular and rarely used, Friendster had 300 million users at the beginning of its launch, which is a consideration that social media's prospect is something to pledge. Two years after the founding of Friendster, Mark Zuckerberg and his three friends created Facebook [2]. After many years of development, Facebook became a very popular social media used by billions of people; as of today, it has been downloaded by five billion people.

Realizing the appetite of social media users, many brand owners finally had amazing ideas to spread their brand through social media within creating brand awareness purposes. That was the first idea of social media marketing. Social media marketing had no charge for its activity and could be done anywhere at any time, making it simple for any brand that wanted to advertise on Facebook. Multiple appearances of a product had the possibility of being known in public, and that is what is called "brand awareness" Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok are popular social media applications that were launched after their two predecessors [3]. As an argument, the researcher showed the data from the perfect percentage of internet users, which is 100%; the active social media users were more than 93%. The multitude of social media users' percentage made social media keep growing in the wider society. Social media's popularity in today's societies is not doubtful anymore. In the marketing world, social media marketing is popular since social media can do something people could not do in the past [4]. On the other side, there are three reasons why social media is popular nowadays. First, social media has allowed us to connect with other people around the world, across the country, and make it possible to meet by phone so humans could exchange words with each other even though they are widely separated, which is something that humans could not do in the past. This made connections with people who share the same interests and gathered them online to have discussions on the social media platform. In the past, when letters were very popular in their time humans were allowed to have pen pals—two people with the same interests who exchanged letters. Now, with the increase in industrial development, social media has grown bigger and has its own communities; in other words, this is something that a newsletter, television, radio, or phone could not do in the past. So as new generations, this might be a new thing and a new opportunity to learn and to apply into our social lives.

Stepping into the next point, which was the second point, we could draw the conclusion that social media marketing allowed users to interact and influence each other. Knowing more about social media interaction, influencing was one of the many ways to make a brand resonate. This social interaction, which we called influencing, finally became an action, and this action created the possibility of purchasing. After the influenced people took advantage of the advantages of the brand, they finally influenced other people, so the chain of influencing and interaction never stopped but kept growing, which made it possible for the brand to take more profit. That was the magic of social media and how it worked; the polarization of social media was clear enough to be known since the users often got more recommendations after feeling interested in one product. The third point of the social media marketing function was related to the brand's social media account. By having a brand's social media account, the owner or

marketing teams would be easier to know the customers' requirements or measure the marketing results. By having social media, a brand could build interaction and relationships with the customers, creating brand awareness and allowing brand communication to become public news and gain popularity. Building connections with customers was the main point for creating public reliance, which resulted in the brand owner knowing their customers' needs better than before. This was very useful if the brand wanted to develop a new product or introduce it to the public. At the end, the brand gained credibility with customers, and now it has loyal ones.

Talking about social media development for creating brand awareness, social media marketing often used TikTok as its platform to make its brand bigger and reach as many as social media could. We heard a lot about TikTok, but what exactly was it? TikTok is an application that was known as a short-video platform that could be hosted by users related to many genres such as advertising, mini-vlogging, dance, jokes, or in short, what we called entertainment social media [5]. TikTok presented short videos that affected the addictivity of its users. Addictivity appeared because of the dopamine response, which was related to our brain systems for creating pleasure and helping to feel it. The addiction happened because of a feel-good neurotransmitter that made its users come back after they tried it once. That was what came to TikTok: the enjoyable features and videos in TikTok enticed its users to come back after the first view and affect the learning and attention parts of human brain nerves [6]. In TikTok, there were many influencers that were being endorsed by many brands to promote their products and sell them to the public. Product influence was only possible if the influencers had the ability to influence the public. As a new social media platform, TikTok had seen massive growth in the last three years. As recorded on the Smart Insight website in their report with the title Global Media of Statistical Research 2022, the increasing users were up 142% in the last twelve months. Even though Facebook users still held the record for the most daily active users, yet its age was much older than TikTok, the increasing number of TikTok users was still a warning for Facebook considering that TikTok's popularity just increased in 2016 and had 500 million active users in 2021 [7].

With the rise of TikTok, marketing seemed to have found a new home in the hearts of the public. As previously stated, the dopamine receptor was calling people back to TikTok because TikTok had taken their attention, and by that, many brands were calling influencers back to influence people. TikTok had the ability to be a media platform for marketing, along with increasing brand awareness, since the brand owner inferred that TikTok was conforming to the need and its eagerness to catch more customers, with the result that its brand was known everywhere. The presence of social media in the marketing world was a journey for a brand to be known further by the public. According to the data that had been collected, there were 4.7 billion humans who used social media. Propitiously, used TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, or other social media that were available to you. According to research, the number of people using social media would reach 6 billion by the year 2027. This occurred as a result of the globalization industry, which required more from the internet in terms of speed, updating, and flexibility. In accordance with Global Media of Statistic Research 2022 that was released in July 2022, it mentioned that there were 227 million humans connected to social media in the last 12 months, which related to the fantastical of the social media users that reached up to 59% of the world population. That could be concluded if social media users had reached more than half of the world's population, which indicated the high world population's appetite for the social media's presence [7].

Marketing through TikTok presented a new source of income for the brand owners. Based on the TikTok elevated users, brand owners were being competitive to advertise their product. By using the use and gratification theories, the researchers were observing how the brand owner and the customers thought that TikTok was a suitable social media marketing platform. The use of use and gratification theory in social media marketing was done since TikTok was in accordance with the seller's needs, which were, in this marketing context, that the seller needed many audiences that came from the page area as one of the TikTok features that accommodated interesting videos as the audience's interest. Inside TikTok, the users could share or post a fifteen-second video up to a three-minute long one; even in its latest feature, it could record videos up to ten minutes long. All users were able to upload the same videos with other users, but every human had its uniqueness, which made every TikTok video different even with the same sound they used. In July 2022, TikTok had been downloaded by 1 billion users, including active users. In its first year of primetime launch, Facebook only had one million users by the end of 2004, which was the first year it acquired its first 500 million users six years after its launch, which made differences with TikTok. TikTok's growth was massive; it took just six years to reach one billion users, which was twice the number of Facebook users.

When talking about social media marketing, it cannot be considered complete without mentioning Facebook as the most popular social media platform. The online advertising system was introduced in 2007, with Facebook being the first to launch it. Initially, Facebook's advertisement service, called "flyers," was placed on the homepage, and as the user scrolled down, the advertisements appeared, creating an influencing system. Antonio Martinez founded this advertising polarization system to create the influencing system. Eventually, this advertisement system was modified by other social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and others.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Descriptive qualitative.

Descriptive qualitative was one of the research methods used in this study. The qualitative research method involves presenting transpired facts in its field while collecting research data to provide analytical data presentation. Through this method, the analysis result from its field can be described. The study was conducted for three months before the official research started, using the qualitative research method, to observe the behavior of market players in using social media to promote their products. During the course of this qualitative method, several processes had to happen before the analysis results could be obtained, as shown in the chart below.

Figure 1 provides a simple explanation of how a group of data was collected, reduced, presented, and verified. Data reduction is a simple way to produce an easier-to-understand conclusion, and the result was easy to read and accept by the readers. During the data reduction process, the author erased or deleted some un-useful data, especially the ones that were not in accordance with the research concept or disturbed the research theme, resulting in better suitability with the research concept. Thus, the result of this research is easier to understand by the readers [8]. Several research studies have been conducted on social media marketing. Marketing through the TikTok application as a marketing medium has been explored and could be utilized as the marketer's fulfillment tool. The main difference between this research and previous research is the research method used. The previous research by Yang Y and Ha L

titled "Why People Use TikTok (Douyin) and How Their Purchase Intentions Are Affected by Social Media Influencers in China: A Uses and Gratification and Parasocial Relationship Perspective" used quantitative research methods [9]. By using the same mass communication theory and the same focus of discussion, through the quantitative research method, the readers could understand the role of social media influencers and their impact on TikTok's marketing. The difference between the quantitative and qualitative methods lies in the data presentation procedures. In the quantitative method, researchers used the collected data in a numeric way, which was presented more in a table, statistical analysis, or chart format [10].

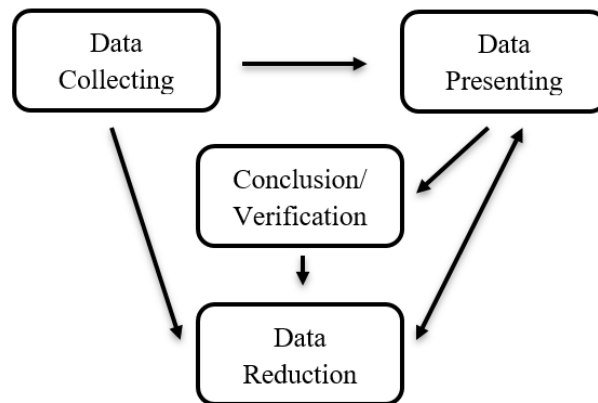


Figure 1. Qualitative research data analysis process.

This study used a different research method than the previous one; it used qualitative and descriptive methods. The discussion focus of qualitative descriptive methods is deeper and more comprehensive compared to quantitative methods that focus on the data [11]. TikTok as a marketing medium is a social phenomenon that keeps appearing because of the dynamic world, in which the emergence of TikTok as a marketing medium started because of inadvertence and the availability of opportunities. This is the main reason why the qualitative descriptive method was used in this research and study. After deciding to use this qualitative research method, the researcher used some efficient accumulation data techniques (ADT) in accordance with the related topic that complemented the result and discussion deeper in TikTok's marketing, such as interviews and online desk research. The use of interviews as this research ADT ensured that the research was subjectively in accordance with market players' answers who use and benefit from TikTok as a marketing medium [12].

2.2. Uses and gratification theory.

TikTok is a media marketing platform because it had a large user base, with Gen Z accounting for the majority of users, and Gen Z was the society's largest group until the Demographic Dividend in 2030 [13]. It had many interesting features that could be used by the user, had various types of videos, and had wider audience coverage than Instagram. This variousness made TikTok loved by the content creator group, allowing their ideas to be developed as they liked while creating creative videos that were pleasant to watch by the public.

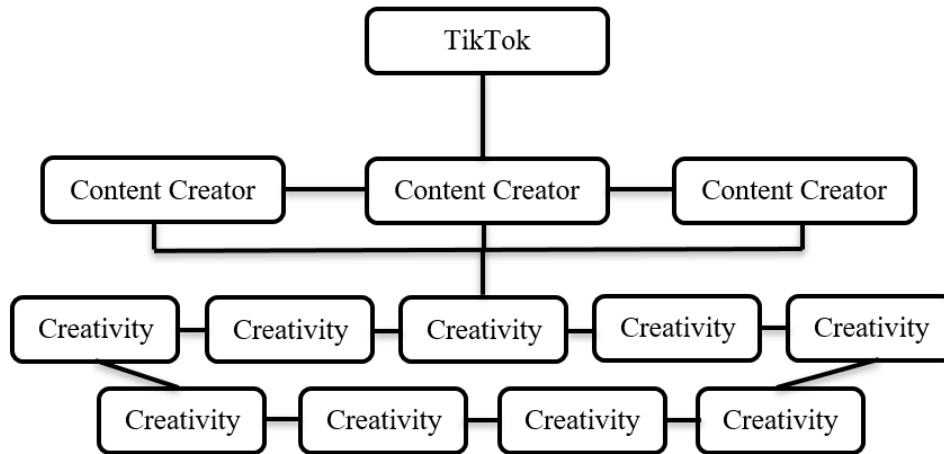


Figure 2. How TikTok's Creativity Works [22].

From Figure 2, it can be seen that TikTok created a good platform for content creators to distribute their creativity, which market players utilized. They paid content creators to make interesting videos about their products, with the most popular and liked being honest review videos. If the review was positive, the public was more likely to believe and trust the product, leading to an increase in product buyers [14]. This is in accordance with the Uses and Gratification theory developed between the 1970s and the 1980s. The theory has high relevance with four factors, one of which was found and developed by McQuail, Blumer, and Brown and has effective relevance if used to judge specific things that people choose personally in media. Introducing the use and gratification theory, it could be understood that uses and gratifications are the continuation of motivation theory. In this section of the theory, humans are assumed to be the ones who seek satisfaction and needs in a hierarchical manner. It is known as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Reward Expectancy}}{\text{The Effort which Done}}$$

Based on the explanation in the picture above, the conclusion would be that if humans needed something, they had to provide effort to obtain it. According to several experts, there were several typologies in the theory of uses and gratification. For example, in 1981 Rubin categorized the tendency to use television into several categories: spending time, excitement, escape, social interaction, obtaining information, and enjoyment of carrying out social interactions [15]. These categories have relevance with how market players use TikTok as their gratification appliance, with increasing availability and engagement of customers being a main modality for market players to reach and increase brand awareness, and market their products [16].

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. TikTok as marketing media.

By virtue of the presence of the internet and social media, humans were allowed to use and utilize social media as part of their lifestyle. Using social media in daily life was not something new; most people subduing their heads and watching the screen everywhere was a common

thing to find in today's society [17]. TikTok was a massive growth of social media among the many social medias used by society. The research about TikTok as a marketing medium was not as extensive as other research, but the impact of product marketing itself and the brand owner's intention in marketing their products were something we could not avoid and could be seen with the bare eyes. Despite its simple looks, marketing through social media was complex enough to be analyzed with many insights that had to be fulfilled by a brand to determine the success of branding and marketing. The triumph in social media TikTok was measured by how many people watched the video, how many people liked the video, how many people commented and stated that they needed the product, how many people shared the uploaded video, and how many people saved the video and put it on their "watch later" list. When measuring market success, we looked at how many people bought our product and how many returned to buy the same product from the same brand.

Likes on TikTok were dependent on the For Your Page (FYP) section; for example, if there was a user who liked a video, the other colleagues who followed each other saw the same video, and if someone liked the video again, the video appeared on another account, and so forth [6]. That being the reason why some videos had many likes, increasing the product engagement. The primary goals of branding were to foster community development of a brand, expand the scope of a brand's public awareness, and make that product easy to remember or even top of mind [18]. TikTok's users increased rapidly due to the growth of social media and changing human habits. As the researcher mentioned before, the growth of TikTok was terrifying; it had become too massive for a trend. TikTok had become at the top of the list for most popular apps. This data was collected by August 2022. As TikTok's accomplishment of reaching 1.2 billion users showed, the marketers who planned to use TikTok as social media had enrolled 5% of the population, while the other 74% were not going to use this app because of the difficulties of engagement and the other 30% were still interested in learning about TikTok's features. This meant that TikTok's competition between each marketer was at a low point, which meant every marketer had a high opportunity to create and promote their brand [19].

TikTok was considered a new development in social media, but the growth mindset of the users always saw a chance, no matter how small, which led the users to develop their brand and make TikTok their platform to share and use TikTok [19]. The opportunity was the reason TikTok became a marketing platform. From the interview the researcher conducted in 2022, one of the sources of information said that TikTok gave the marketer a promise to get a new chance for marketing and create a new style of marketing. As a market player, TikTok had given and developed new features to create interesting advertisements and a new ambiance for the marketing world. By the different trends that were made, TikTok had opened up a new opportunity for branding and marketing, and as a market player, we should have taken into consideration that TikTok had a wide area to cover in marketing (Interviewing: TikTok as New Opportunity, 2022). In this article, researchers showed the magnitude of the population, which was the focus of this study. In marketing through TikTok, researchers took all the population who were TikTok users and, with one billion users, decided to take three sources as the focus of the qualitative study of the research sample.

3.2. The analysis of TikTok as marketing media from market player perspective.

On October 17th, 2022, the researcher conducted an interview with one of the sources of information who was based in Depok, West Java, Indonesia, namely (AP), a 21-year-old content creator who had started his journey as a TikToker (someone who mainly recognized themselves as TikTok video makers called TikTokers) in 2021 when the growth of the TikTok platform was at its highest popularity with one billion downloads. The interview lasted for one hour and twenty minutes and was conducted via online platforms as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Interview construct of TikTok as marketing media.

Point	AP	RS	DR
TikTok as Marketing Media	<p>“first of all, TikTok has wider audience and the users is wow... one billion users and imagine 3 millions people watch your video”</p> <p>“Well, in TikTok I can be more creative, different as TV which I need to follow the trend, in TikTok I can make a trend. Many people have followed my trends if you noticing.”</p>	<p>“I use TikTok as marketing media because it has a lot of active users and I can see the pattern of how we can be in people’s FYP, I also think that this TikTok is potential.”</p>	<p>“Fine art met a very hard time in modern era, not many people enjoying us, but when I start my marketing through TikTok, I make fine art become famous again and it is the effect of influence in TikTok.”</p>
Audience	<p>“TikTok make a lot of money, it also has different range of audience to other social media, in TikTok everyone can see our appearance even if they are not our followers.”</p>	<p>“I sometimes agree with people who said that TikTok’s algorithm seems unclear that leads to our uncertainty as market player, but when our video start to blow up, it does blow the audience.”</p>	<p>“My market is people who really interested in art, especially fine art, but when I start to influence people in TikTok, they start to like fine art too even it wasn’t their preferences at first. I think TikTok is a good opportunity to expand our market since it can be seen from other people which make our marketing project spread widely even they are not my followers.”</p>
TikTok as Money Maker	<p>“You know how many that I can get a week with TikTok’s marketing?”</p> <p>“from what I sold, I can get up to a thousand dollars a week, but the amount is not sure enough, it can be higher or lower. Even in one event I ever got fifty million rupiah’s a week, well I am still 21 years old and where all that money goes? As young entrepreneur, I turn the money into marketing and marketing make me more money”</p>	<p>“around 5 million rupiah’s a week never lower than that, but if its start to get down, I post an advertising and people start to buy my stuffs.”</p> <p>“I was a retail employee, I only got 3 million rupiah’s a month, but I when I took the risk of being TikTok’s influencer, my life a whole change, I open 3 online stores, and I put them all in TikTok.”</p>	<p>“at first time I didn’t get any, but my creativity increase and make more content in TikTok. Fine art met a little bit defiance, but I can get more than 3 million a day selling my painting.”</p>

In this interview, the respondent mentioned some points that are analyzed further in this section, as well as the comparison between TikTok and other social media platforms that have a big impact on marketing. The first analysis of TikTok as a marketing medium is how people manage and take advantage of the platform itself. As mentioned before by the researcher, the number of people using social media has its influence on marketing, as the growth of viewers and the platform have an impact on a brand. The reason why the informant used TikTok as the marketing platform is because of its massive growth and the number of active users. When the

number of viewers for a product increases, so does the level of engagement; the higher the number of viewers, the more valuable the video in Table 2.

Table 2. Marketing differences between TikTok and Instagram.

X	Instagram	TikTok
The post	Only can be seen by Followers	Could easily see by public
Audience	Limited, depends on followers	Unlimited, public access
Opportunity	By influencers endorsement	Self-marketing, no need influencers
Growth	Slow growth	Fast growth

TikTok users grew in number and became more useful for marketing purposes. This phenomenon was seen in the interpretative paradigm, which naturally occurred and could be seen without deeper observation. Intentionally, in this research, the observation had to be clear to get trustworthy data. In the interview session with one of the sources of information, the differences between TikTok marketing and Instagram were opposite. In Instagram, the post could only be viewed by the followers of its account, but in TikTok, the post could be in the For Your Page section, which could possibly be seen. In short, TikTok had a larger opportunity for a brand to be known by other users and get a higher engagement point. The polarization of communication in TikTok was common in any other social media, but hard to guess. The type of video displayed was determined by the user's preferences; if a user preferred our product, more of the same type of product would appear prominently on the page. This polarization of the product would easily make the engagement point of the account rise, increasing the sales target.

The next information was obtained from RS (21 years old), a market player from Depok City who pursued the same field as AP. Through the interview session, the two had something in common in providing information about the market, judging from the progress of TikTok. The similarity of the caption said that TikTok had become a good marketing medium due to the number of people who used it. TikTok also had a different reach from Instagram, and this could be seen through the explanation that TikTok had differences from other social media. It reached a broader audience since the video was public. The number of TikTok users was also one of the factors that contributed to the higher engagement point. RS (21 years old) provided the answer, stating that the amount of revenue got was much higher. Sometimes the confusion in creative video making was the main problem for the market players, but on the contrary, the confusion was created when the users knew the tricks to getting more views and engagement. The similarity of the information obtained from these two respondents implied that TikTok was the right tool for market players to develop their businesses and become successful. TikTok also met the needs of market players, such as the audience and the high amount of creativity obtained from the number of views on one video. The point was, TikTok could be utilized by market players to meet their needs in marketing a product.

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, the use of TikTok as a marketing medium was found to be in accordance with the theory of uses and gratification. TikTok was used as a marketing medium because it met the needs of its users in targeting a product. TikTok was also considered successful in satisfying the needs of market players in achieving three things. Firstly, an increase in revenue was experienced by market players when there was an increase in engagement. Secondly, there was an increase in the audience, as through the TikTok algorithm, an account could be developed

according to what market players wanted. In other words, the type of account a market player wanted to see could be created through TikTok. Finally, there was an increased need for creativity, which could be met by browsing through the TikTok page, where a market player could see a wider audience with a variety of creativity displayed on one page, providing inspiration for market players.

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Competing Interest

The researcher has declared there is no competing interest in this research.

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