

## Understanding Message Distortion In Tiktok Media Exposure

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### A B S T R A C T

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This qualitative research examines and explains the phenomenon of delivering messages in the TikTok application. There are consequences for changing the meaning of the message after a message is delivered through. The study used Harold Lasswell's concept of communication, which was linked to James Coleman's rational choice theory. This study aims to explain the essence of the message to the TikTok community. Researchers use Harold Lasswell's communication component to explain this phenomenon because TikTok is a mass communication medium. The results found that distorted messages occurred due to information sharing on the same thing. The TikTok community took over the same message and transmitted it as a new video. It was also found that the purpose of communication on TikTok is not only to convey a message but also to convey or receive the same feelings from the messenger. That is why TikTok has become an addiction for its users.

## **INTRODUCTION**

When YouTube media takes much television from the public, Instagram is famous as a place to show off, and Twitter is famous as an arena for the war of words; TikTok is here to offer space for channeling feelings, both words, sounds, and music are transmitted as videos. On TikTok, users are always presented with various videos that suit their interests. "For Your Page," which contains the latest info. When searching for videos, TikTok users can forget about the situation and spend a very long time. This condition is interpreted as addiction (Solikha et al., 2021).

The existence of TikTok began when COVID-19 hit in 2020. People isolated in social distancing restrictions also find TikTok an alternative entertainment to survive the onslaught of boredom (Green et al., 2022). Some people are active information broadcasters, while most act passively as connoisseurs of TikTok shows, occasionally commenting on a comment column. The simple way of using TikTok quickly attracts many users. Forms of communication inside TikTok include comedy, Documentary, Communal, Interactive, and Meta (Schelewald, 2021). The TikTok application allows users to create videos with a duration of 15 seconds; since 2021, it has reached two minutes (Solikha et al., 2021).

In this situation, TikTok users are experiencing exposure to TikTok media. In the media concept, exposure means everyone's activities when observing public news (Yulianti, 2022), in this case, observing everything that happens on the TikTok account. People who observe various videos and information that appear on the screen are said to be experiencing TikTok exposure.

Later, TikTok transformed into a more serious atmosphere, which contained political campaigns, economic education, social exhibitions, and the need for other information distribution that caused opium. In this case, everyone can receive information, and some respond to the information by creating a new video. Therefore, various incomplete information milled around without pause on each search. Researchers call this a distorted message because of the presence of unique communicators and communicators. People have to look for accurate information in other media to synchronize the information scattered in TikTok, Or they can ignore it by going to the next Video.

What is meant by the distorted message is a change in the message's meaning caused by the communicator to the message intended by the communicator. Muhamad (2002), said that the lack of accuracy or difference in meaning between what is intended by the sender and the recipient's interpretation is called message distortion (Afriani, 2020). Message distortion often occurs when people organize news in mass media and share it through social media accounts. Also, private messages have become public consumption.

The organized message transforms into a new meaning, so the receiver is trapped in a certain influence due to distorted message consumption. This is a common problem on conventional social media, especially on TikTok. The message presented has been contaminated with the communicator's or messenger's interests. Ideas and ideas that transform into messages but are

caught up in the desires of the communicator cause anomy in the user community TikTok.

Each social media platform has its characteristics for delivering messages. TikTok can be said to be a convergence of the characteristics of social media that existed before, such as Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. Messages conveyed through TikTok are prone to distortion or are deliberately arranged to experience distortion. Because communicators and communicants are in an atmosphere that is not serious about accepting or rejecting a message, their existence cannot be detected unless the message they share, some repetition with different points of view, and comment pages that are not on the same path as the message are anomalies of other discrete messages. On TikTok, people can easily share, receive, and revise messages even if they are not the primary owners of those messages.

Furthermore, researchers' convergence of communicators and communicants is called abstract communication actors. Researchers use rational choice theory for abstract actors of distorted communication and messages. To explain this communication situation, researchers use elements of Harold Lasswell's communication because the understanding of communication offered by Harold Lasswell has long been in the realm of mass communication and is suitable for the era of social media, which is also for mass information needs.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Rational Choice Theory*

Although is a sociological theory that explains the choices made in society; researchers consider this theory to explain phenomena that occur in TikTok. Researchers consider people who use the TikTok application to be rational choices for their users. For James Coleman, rational choice theory is the rational action of individuals or actors to perform an action based on a certain goal. That goal is determined by certain values or preferences that are useful for their lives. James Coleman believed that "people act intentionally toward a goal, with that purpose shaped by values or choices. This action is a social action that a person performs based on conscious considerations and choices related to the purpose of the action and the availability of the tools used to achieve it.

### *Communication Elements*

The characteristic of Harold Lasswell's communication model is that it is linear or one-way. Therefore, Harold Laswell's understanding of communication is that it is in the realm of mass communication. It is suitable for examining the convergence of communicators and communicants in TikTok. By placing distorted messages as consequences, they must be experienced as part of the rational choices of their users. According to Harold Lasswell, communication is "*Who Says What in Which Channel To Whom With What Effect*" or "**Who** who conveys, **what** submitted, **through what**, **To whom**, and what **Effect**."The author believes that the influence or effect of communication is a part that has already experienced convergence with other communication elements.

### ***Communicators and Communicants***

Simply put, a communicator is a person who conveys a message. Hafied Cangara (Bangun et al., 2018) explained that communicators are parties who convey messages to a person or a wide audience. Meanwhile, according to Effendy (2000), a communicator is a group or someone who conveys ideas, feelings or thoughts to others.

Communicants are recipients of messages that analyze and interpret the content they receive. A good communicator understands the message's meaning and is emotionally driven to do or obey the message he receives. Clarity, thoroughness and intensity of communication will affect the level of behavior and work of communicants. Apart from channeling social input into the social system, communication is also a means of behavior modification, influencing change, producing information, achieving goals and assisting in implementing and integrating management functions, as Falimu (2017) explained.

### ***Media: The Existence of TikTok***

According to Schramm (1977), media is a messenger technology or information that is instructional and can be seen, read, heard, and manipulated. According to Van Dijk (2015), social media is a media platform that focuses on the existence of users who facilitate their activities and collaboration. As a social media, TikTok is one of the most popular social media platforms. Werner J Severin and James Q Tankard, Jr. suggest that media use by society can be classified as the existence of basic social and psychological needs based on mass media or other sources that influence patterns of media exposure that produce needs and consequences (Hakim et al., 2020). TikTok uses a multi-faceted strategy of popularly connected short or audio-visual videos to lure users (Giuseppe, 2021).

The app, which is growing in China, uses artificial intelligence to curate disruptive content and marketing to propel its rise to users' algorithms. It also impacts spreading individual or group interests to influence the viewers of TikTok. TikTok was created in September 2016 and launched for iOS and Android operating systems in 2017 (Green et al., 2022). They quoted from *Selebriti.id* TikTok users in Indonesia are second in the world, with 99.1 million users aged 18 years and over. TikTok users in Indonesia spend an average of 23 hours a month surfing on TikTok accounts. The functions of TikTok are archiving, self-expression, social interaction, and escapism, while the behavioral use of TikTok remains different in level and influence (Omar, 2020).

### ***Message: Distorted Message***

According to Onong Effendy, the message is: "a component in the communication process is a combination of one's thoughts and feelings using symbols, language / other symbols are conveyed to others." Abdul Hanafi explained that the message was "a fictitious product produced by a source-encoder," according to A. Widjaja and M. Arisy Wahab, there are three messages: Informative, Persuasive and Coercive. In the distribution context, the message is fixed, but its meaning is distorted. The characteristics of message distortion can also apply to TikTok, as quoted on the page [kompas.com](http://kompas.com). These

include: 1). Physical impairment, 2). Semantic problems, 3). Language and cultural differences and message distortion can be caused by language and cultural differences, 4). No feedback, and 5). flood of information.

## METHODOLOGY

This research is a descriptive-qualitative approach. Researchers tried to explain the phenomenon of messages and communicator convergence based on direct observation by watching TikTok and conducting random interviews. Indirectly, the students interviewed helped researchers observe things related to TikTok. According to Nawawi (2012), this direct observation is a way of collecting data carried out through observation and recording of symptoms that appear in the object of research, which is carried out directly at the place of an event, circumstance, or situation that occurs.

## RESEARCH RESULT

TikTok offers a different experience as a social media platform because it offers a unique way of delivering user messages. TikTok does not offer effective or successful messages. Because of TikTok, people can go to other applications to find out more about what happens on TikTok. Therefore, in TikTokTok, free messages are understood as anything, which is why TikTok is closer to the feeling. Some users find what they are looking for regarding their feelings and moods.

Concept FYP is similar to YouTube, but the message content is concise, making TikTok attractive. The users do not feel bored, and TikTok is addictive. This is in line with the development carried out by TikTok to bring more users, namely, using power influencers, traditional approaches to marketing strategy, and digital customer surveys for feedback (Green et al., 2022). The content's most preferred TikTok element besides video is the comment column. Users often find the comedic aspect in the comments section. The comment column also became a kind of space different from Vedio. One phenomenon is where communicators and communicants exchange roles through mechanisms. *Stitch video inside TikTok is combined with a video of the person commenting.*



Figure 1. A man playing with a baby

Therefore, Harold Lasswell's element of mass communication is needed to see the intermingling of messages and communicators on TikTok. 1). *Who Says What* TikTok users have discussed many things, especially since the Ministry of

Communication and Information blocked this application in 2017. TikTok does not offer themes, but the user's life is the theme of TikTok itself. TikTok only offers a tendency for things that are close to the user personally, such as food, motivation, hatred, love, heartbreak, and more.



Figure 2. Dancing videos and comments



Figure 3. News from online media spread on Tik Tok

Anything can be conveyed through TikTok. The reception of the message depends heavily on FYP on the user's screen, whether about lifestyle, food, sports, even political issues, and many other information appropriate for the recipient. The messengers on TikTok have summed it up much simpler. You want to explore the comment column if a piece of content is considered interesting, in addition to the likes of the same value as other social media. The comment column on TikTok is unique and cool, as is its language style.

The communicator is inseparable from the message. A person can only be said to be a communicator if they produce a message. However, in TikTok, we never know who is producing. Regarding rational choices, communicators choose TikTok because the way it works is simple and can touch feelings.

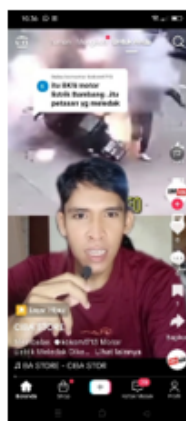


Figure 4. Someone is doing stich video

In conventional mass elements, the audience that reads the news is the message's target. On TikTok, the target message can be sent both ways. Communicators can convey a message to themselves. Some things get crowded when someone uploads and asks them what they think of something the

communicator is talking about. Everyone who spends time with TikTok does not necessarily want that message. All messages move by chance to arrive at the target, but TikTok users do not feel like they are the target of a message. If the message coincidentally touches his feelings or thoughts, he will surf to other media, searching for the complete message. That is why conventional media fill the pieces of their shows on TikTok. TikTok is also very useful as a promotional space for film, music, politics, and other agendas.

**In which channel,** Social media is one of the revolutions in public communication caused by the development of the internet. It has high-quality camera gadgets, making many people have fun new activities; people will easily take pictures anywhere and anytime, after which they are uploaded to their social media (Prihatiningsih, 2017). TikTok has millions of users in Indonesia. TikTok houses several important sources of information before people sneak into other media to find a wider source of information. Later, mass media such as television presented footage of shows on TikTok to attract the attention of viewers, mass media online presented their news pieces, and Twitter and even YouTube provided event snippets and posts on TikTok to attract people to their place. Social media, especially TikTok, has changed the use of communication resources (Purwanti, 2022).

**With what effect can TikTok be a place for various feelings to be channeled?** Sadness, comedy, loss, family, hatred and hope, the atmosphere on TikTok can change drastically as a person's video moves from one video to another. TikTok becomes a place where a person looks great, excels and is unpredictable. However, when we sneak into the comments, we will find thoughts and things that contradict the video. TikTok provides unique effects for recipients and messengers. Some people expect the message to be popular, while others do not realize the information will be popular.

## DISCUSSION

Messages are always formed because of the communicator and because of the communicant. TikTok offers a merging between the two through alluring audio-visual capabilities and mechanics of Search, which is opium. Information circulating on TikTok is prone to the dualism of understanding. Therefore, TikTok does not offer effective or successful messaging. Free messages are understood as anything, which is why TikTok feels closer.

This aligns with distorted messages, namely, the amount of information caused by many communicators. The number of communicators is caused by communicants who turn into communicators by creating new videos on the same thing. Therefore, the message distortion is only explained by the Information flood due to The number of communicators in TikTok.

If media convergence is Inevitable, then Harold Lasswell's communication elements can be used to see how individuals differ and Confirm their choice to live as TikTok users. Researchers use rational choice theory to explain how the best media search to consume their message is to put it in TikTok, in the form of pieces videos on YouTube, TV programs, Twitter and Instagram, and music media platforms. Video on *TikTok* remains available even after viewing (Schelewald,2021)

These assumptions only occur if TikTok users feel that their choice to use this application is a rational choice for them. They choose to use TikTok because of their absolute choice. Users are active people who use all the elements provided or feel they exist in the same atmosphere as FYP. It is good for an atmosphere that contains comedy to pursue entertainment. Who does not laugh when Watching a Video of TikTok that contains unique and difficult people to find in the real world? The smell of cuteness is fierce and complete, from the video to his random comments.

Innocence, superficiality, and a desire for the same sense arose within each of them. Documentation People share an atmosphere of familiarity, puzzles, journeys, and pieces of events that feel so close to the viewer's feelings. Togetherness, how people do that together. They take action to show how they live in an environment, working on things with their joy. Interactive Liveliness and the adrenaline offered, uniqueness and closeness The atmosphere is close and opium, making it difficult for users to take their eyes off TikTok.

There is much initiative in communicating on social media, Starting from creating content, commenting, and bringing your ideas to life. Some people have favorites to visit in the comment section of the content. It is related to the satisfaction of needs with the selection of media, which lies with the audience members. To harmonize such an atmosphere, *TikTok competes with other social media regarding* satisfaction. The absence of repetition in the video makes TikTok infinite because almost everything is tailored to users' goals. Judgments of morality, limitations, opposition, and acceptance grow from culture. That is why TikTok has become so popular in Indonesia.

By letting go of the distorted aspect of the message, TikTok communicators only pursue rational interests, goal achievement, and strategies to remain in that medium. TikTok communicators and communicants make a rational choice to pursue happiness, whereas the messaging aspect is not the main goal. TikTok offers no room for truth. That is why people give and take their feelings inside the TikTok app.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

TikTok has become a distinct discourse as social media because it offers a unique message delivery method. Therefore, we need to measure Harold Lasswell's communication component to see how communicators converge in the realm of the masses and the quality of the message presented. The best part of explaining that situation is to accept the consequences that TikTok is a rational choice for each user. Transfer the community's requirements to information that is considered more accessible and populist. TikTok offers absolute space because it does not emphasize The value of truth. TikTok only offers hospitality by playing algorithms without boredom. A media escalation not found in other media. It is undeniable that many people have switched to *TikTok*. Those who use TikTok are being buffeted with various messages; they are communicators and communicators who converge in the realm of the masses. Messages are not an important need because there is almost no truth in TikTok, but TikTok provides joy.

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