

Commodification of the Elderly in TikTok Live Streaming (TikTok Account Case Study @intan_komalasari92)

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ABSTRACT

TikTok is a social media platform that facilitates live broadcasts that benefit from monetary rewards for content creators. This study aims to analyze the exploitation of older adults in TikTok live streaming, using phenomenological methods with a qualitative descriptive approach. The results show older adults to be talents who beg online in TikTok live streaming content. Driving factors include a desire for attention and income, supported by accessible internet and social media access that broadens the narrative. Social media provides an excellent opportunity for online beggars to attract netizens' attention through sensations and complaining activities due to boredom on social media. The empathy of netizens is the driver of viral online begging content by utilizing the saweran feature. The negative impacts include violating legal norms, undermining human values, and creating unhealthy economic and financial dependence on online begging practices through TikTok live streaming

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of technology today impacts significant changes in human life, both socially and culturally (Rafiq, 2020). This then triggers changes and shifts in lifestyle and social changes (Yoga, 2019). In this case, the development of information technology is increasing, and proof is that people can easily access information anytime, anywhere, with an internet network that reaches from all places and all sources (Hamiruddin, 2020).

Social media is used to interact and communicate and as a platform for businesses to showcase themselves to their customers (Arsyad, 2022). Social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok are used as forums or media to foster creativity, add ideas, and display published social media content that followers can enjoy (Bayquni & Saputra, 2019). In addition to exposing oneself, social media serves as a platform to convey purpose and self-expression (Suminar et al., 2020). Humans can express themselves in various ways on social media, one of which is by providing interesting content.

Smartphone technology is now developing rapidly, communication features today are no longer limited to text, photos, and music, but also include video or audio-visual elements (Irawan, 2021). Communication via video is no longer offline in that video is recorded and then delivered through the application; however, communication is now carried out in real-time, or application users can watch directly or communicate directly via video (Setyawan & Marzuki, 2018). Social media platforms with various capabilities encourage content creators to innovate with available options. TikTok is one of them; it has a live component that content creators use to benefit from rewards from life that can be exchanged for money (TikTok, 2023).

Recently, many account users have rationalized all events to get attention or steal pity in the form of gifts from the audience (Jannah & Saha Fasadena, 2023). The only story involves a grandmother submerging herself in a mud pond. Surprisingly, "begging" online went viral because many people sympathized and sent gifts through the TikTok live-streaming feature (Sari et al., 2021). The grandmother's actions above have negative impacts, such as decreased body condition due to spending too much time soaking in a pool of water (Jannah & Saha Fasadena, 2023). However, the account owner and the grandmother did not seem to give up on the activity.

Based on the viral phenomenon above, this study was compiled to analyze how TikTok social media is used by content creators who should be able to make money positively and educationally. However, on the other hand, content creators use TikTok live streaming media to create content that exploits elderly grandmothers or mothers, as is the case on the @intan_komalasari92 TikTok account. Data collection techniques in this paper use observation and documentation methods through previous study publications and from sources that support this writing.

The theme of discussion in this study, of course, has the same theme as previous research, namely research from Jannah & Saha Fasadena (2023) entitled *The Phenomenon of Live Mud Bathing on Tiktok According to Erving Goffman's Dramaturgy Theory*. Then research the work (Arifin et al., 2022) titled *Mud Bathing Phenomenon Live Tiktok in Islamic Perspective*. Furthermore, research works (Andariesta & Rahayuningsih, 2023), entitled *Exploitation Of The Elderly In The Form Of Online Begging Through Social Media Tiktok*. This research paper has similarities to the object of research, which is TikTok social media, but what distinguishes this paper is that it wants to examine the Commodification of the elderly in tik tok live streaming (a case study of tik @intan_komalasari92 accounts). Therefore, this study aims to analyze the phenomenon of exploitation of the elderly on TikTok live streaming.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Commodification

Commodification comes from the term "commodity," which indicates a capitalist strategy to convert use value into exchange value (Gita and Gatot in Mosco, 2019). The commodification aspect can be further categorized into three components: Commodification of content or everything related to the content presented by the media to be disseminated to the audience. (Manggaga, 2018) asserts that the content offered by the press reflects the interests of capital owners, allowing them to exert influence over media sources to serve their agendas, potentially impacting their audience (Wahzudin et al., 2023).

Commodification is a process closely related to capitalism in which objects, qualities, and signs are transformed into commodities. A commodity is a good whose primary purpose is to be sold in the market (Gora & Olifia, 2018).

Mosco (2009: 132) defines Commodification as transforming the value of a product that previously only had use value into exchange value (selling value), where the price the producer sets determines the value of the need for the good. Mosco (2009: 134) believes that communication is the arena that allows Commodity to occur in this idea of Commodity. This is because communication is a commodity with a significant effect. What happens is not just Commodification to get more value; the message conveyed also contains symbols and images that can be used to increase the recipient's awareness.

Mosco (2009: 135-139) discusses three types of Commodification in its communications:

1. The Commodification of content occurs when a message is transformed from raw data into a meaningful thought system as a marketable commodity.
2. Audience commodification is the process of turning audiences into commodities that can be "sold" to advertisers. The media treats audiences as commodities to earn advertising and money.
3. The Commodification of labor, where workers' abilities and hours are exploited as programs or shows are presented, is a component that keeps viewers engaged in watching television broadcasts.

Commodity studies are often used in media studies for a variety of research, including advertising objects (such as parents, children, men, and women in an advertisement), objects of people in television shows to increase movie show ratings, commodity content in the news (such as cases of harassment or violence against women and children), political content, and so on (Barker, 2014).

Elderly in a Sociological Perspective

The World Health Organization (WHO) considers that the age of 60 years marks the beginning of the transition towards the elderly segment of the population. Even in Japan, a country known for its aging population, individuals over the age of 60 are considered senior citizens, and many Japanese achieve success at that age. Therefore, it is not surprising that there is a saying in Japan that states, "Life begins at the age of 60" (Murlis, 2021).

The elderly population has meaning as the final phase of a person's life cycle, where they have "moved away" from previous times that were more pleasant or full of benefits (Hurlock, 1994).

According to (Hurlock, 1980), elderly individuals must face two significant changes: social and economic. Social changes include the loss of a spouse or friend, a change in the role of grandparents, and a change in relationships with children, where they need to adapt to new roles as adults who can be considered friends who provide advice and help. An example is the change from being an employee to a retiree who spends most of his time at home. Economic changes are related to social position and reputation in society and change in income as they rely on retirement benefits as their source of life.

Atchley (1977) revealed that the elderly is a concept that includes various aspects. In addition to involving physical changes that occur in the body after passing through adulthood, this concept also includes psychological changes such as spirit or memory, mental abilities, and social changes experienced in everyday life.

When understanding the elderly population, there are several factors to consider. However, from a social point of view, the elderly population group has decreased their social role in society. The concept of the elderly population not only pays attention to chronological age but also involves understanding the circle of human life that has reached the old stage. In addition, the concept of the elderly differs from that of the elderly. The understanding of the elderly focuses more on chronological age, which is based on age limits, while the concept of the elderly emphasizes more on physical disabilities, although some are still relatively young (Miko, 2012).

Live Streaming Tiktok

Streaming is a technology that compresses or reduces the size of audio and video files to facilitate transfer over the internet network. It involves continuously sending audio and video files from server to client over a packet-based network (Setyawan & Marzuki, 2018). TikTok has become a rapidly growing platform for short videos and is gaining tremendous popularity around the World (Kaye et al. et al., 2021). Short videos are generally between 15 seconds to 1 minute long and can be uploaded and shared by users. These short videos allow users to capture and share memorable moments easily (Zhang et al., 2019).

TikTok's live streaming function allows users to broadcast themselves to their account followers in real-time. TikTok is just like other social media platforms, including the ability to live stream, but only TikTok users with at least 1000 followers can use the feature (Jannah & Saha Fasadena, 2023). TikTok Live allows users and content creators to interact directly in real time. To go live and receive rewards during the video broadcast, users must be at least 18 years old. However, it is essential to remember that content creators must abide by TikTok's community standards and terms of service to create a fun, happy, and safe environment on TikTok (TikTok, 2023).

METHODOLOGY

This research uses phenomenological study methods with a qualitative descriptive approach to reveal, study, and understand a distinctive and unique phenomenon that has occurred recently (Wulandari & Fauziah, 2019). Unusual experiences or phenomena generally change the attitude, point of view, or behavior of the person experiencing the experience (Fauzia & Rahmiaji, 2019). The subjects in this study are the elderly in TikTok live streaming, a case study on the TikTok account @Intan_Komalasari92. Data collection techniques in this study used observation and documentation methods. The data analysis technique used in this study is qualitative analysis, which includes data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Fadillah, 2019). In this study, the Author analyzed the mud bath phenomenon that was broadcast live on TikTok by @Intan_Komalasari92 accounts. The Author will explain how content creators commodify the elderly to make money through live streaming on TikTok.

RESULT

The Phenomenon of Elderly Exploitation on Tiktok

According to Ningsih, humans naturally express their ideas, thoughts, and conceptions, manifesting in various ways, especially as observable values. Similarly, Tiktok presents the concept of a mud bath that is broadcast live. TikTok is the most popular social media platform today, and according to statistical data, Indonesia has the second largest number of TikTok users worldwide. In 2017, the number of users reached 99.07 million. In April 2022, the number of users in Indonesia was one rank below the United States, which had 136.42 million users (Aditiya, 2023). For now, TikTok is widely used by minors, teenagers, and adults as a source of entertainment. For now, TikTok is widely used by minors, teenagers, and adults as a source of entertainment.

When users go live, they can win prizes from the live. Live giveaways are a feature in a user's account that, when enabled, allows viewers to react and enjoy live user content in real-time. Live gifts are a way to earn diamonds based on the popularity of a user's video. Viewers can send virtual gifts that will be displayed on screen during the live stream. When a user's live summary is displayed, users can see the number of diamonds accumulated at the end of the live (TikTok, 2023). Rewards received during the live stream can be exchanged for money, but the redemption procedure must follow the conditions set by TikTok.

eventually triggered controversy in the community because it was considered a form of exploitation of the elderly and a new form of beggar or online beggar (Yuniar, 2022).



Figure 2. Mud Bath Live-Action Tiktok Account Owner @Intan_Komalasari92
Source: (Sukardi, 2023)

Based on the facts on the ground, most of the audience who directly witnessed the action took a mud bath and gave gifts to content creators, making them even more famous and viral, with the primary purpose of earning money. They use the presence of talents who have reached old age to attract the attention of the audience to watch the live broadcast. When they saw the action of grandma taking a mud bath and soaking for hours, the audience felt pity and sadness, so they gave various gifts to the account that did the live broadcast.

According to Angga Prawadika Aji, a communication lecturer at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP) Universitas Airlangga (UNAIR), social media has now become a place to look for two things: popularity and money. Especially now, content creators on social media compete to offer something that can attract public attention (Puspita, 2023). Angga explained that:

"Shows that exploit poverty often appear and have a large audience. Initially, such content was on television, and now it has been brought to other platforms such as TikTok" (Puspita, 2023).

The motivation for content creators to carry out flashy live-streaming actions involving elderly talents is driven by the desire to increase popularity and compete with other content creators. They also have the opportunity to make quick money and gain popularity.

The selection of elderly talents aims to arouse the audience's sympathy to give as many prizes as possible. The live mud bath action featured the elderly dressed in modest clothes that reflected the lives of the underprivileged. Through this exposure, account owners or content creators hope to attract the attention of viewers. They use this situation to make as much money as possible through the audience's sympathy. Prizes received during live broadcasts are collected and then exchanged for money based on the number of points earned from the prize.

Giving an audience a gift is similar to asking for money, only it is done online. The rewards obtained will be divided in half between the account owner and the talent.

DISCUSSION

Factors that Cause the Phenomenon of Elderly Begging Online

1. Attention and Money

The main motivation of a person to do online begging is to attract attention and earn money. Live content creators on TikTok try to attract the audience's attention through actions that evoke empathy. From the attention and empathy they get, they will receive money through gifts given by the audience. However, the content presented tends to be monotonous. If you continue to present monotonous content, attention and empathy from the audience will likely decrease (Fujita et al., 2020).

2. Internet and Social Media Access

To perform online begging on social media, one must access the internet and social media platforms. The existence of internet access and social media expands the narrative that beggars can convey. The broader the narrative, the more people will watch their live broadcast. Various social media platforms with different characteristics encourage the development of diverse narratives, including stories that provoke feelings of empathy and are sometimes modified (Dayana, 2021).

3. Social Media Networks And Algorithms

Social media offers better opportunities for online beggar content. For online beggars who do giveaways, networking between content creators often has a similar model. Algorithmic systems and social media networks can potentially improve the performance of online beggar content (Nova & Wijayanti, 2021). Especially for those who often create giveaway content, they usually have networks with other content creators who adopt a similar model. Algorithms that can be manipulated through hashtags, FYP (For You Page), and viral keywords increase the potential reach of online beggars to be broader and faster to get attention (Tahir et al., 2020).

4. Sensation and Stage

Since the beginning content should be more intense and weird, sensationalism prevails. Getting attention because of the sensation naturally diverted the attention of countless netizens. Those who beg online are more likely to produce strange and exaggerated things. They realized from the beginning that sensationalism was the primary goal. Sensations will easily capture the attention of many netizens. Then, they get to the stage immediately, increasing their chances of making money (Rahma & Delliana, 2022). For the sake of eliciting this experience, many online content creators beg to be more absurd and loving.

5. User Boredom

Boredom also drives netizens/internet users to become more active in complaining on social media. The same goes for online beggars. One of the factors that drives many people to beg online is boredom. Boredom gives many people more free time that is used to be more active in complaining on social media, including in terms of online begging (Sartina et al., 2020).

6. Empathy is a Significant Factor in Viral Online Begging Content

Online begging content should have extreme and strange elements because thrill is what is pursued. Gaining attention through sensation can attract netizens' attention very strongly (Lambe & Rahmawati, 2021). Generally, those who do online begging will create strange and extreme content. This means they have realized early on that evoking sensations is their primary goal. With the sensation, they can quickly attract the attention of many netizens and get a bigger stage, increasing the potential to earn money. In order to achieve the goal of stirring up sensation, many of these online beggar content creators have become more ridiculous and less empathetic.

7. Exploiting the Gaps in the Saran Feature

According to social media observer Abang Edwin Syarif, the phenomenon currently being discussed by the public has been predicted since the introduction of the gift feature (Defianti, 2023). This is considering the saweran culture that already exists in Indonesia. Currently, Edwin concludes that the many conveniences of being a content creator encourage people to compete. They realize that they can generate significant revenue from the content they create. Videos that get many viewers will often be followed by other creators' content. One trend that is booming lately is begging by asking for Saweran. This has proven effective and many people want to take part in the trend (L. Wulandari et al., 2022).

Impact

Sociologist Sigit Rochadi also commented on the online begging phenomenon by people claiming to be content creators on TikTok. From various viral videos, he saw that what they made was already in the form of exploitation of victims (TV, 2023).

1. Violating Legal Norms

The phenomenon of begging online live on Tiktok triggered the emergence of damaging insults from netizens aimed at the elderly (Latif et al., 2022). The blasphemy is in the form of stigma and discrimination; for example, blasphemy and ridicule directed at the elderly online games can reinforce negative stigma against the elderly in general. This can lead to discrimination and unfair treatment of the elderly in society. It can further fuel the potential spread of hatred; for example, when insults and insults occur in an online environment, it can trigger more hatred and negative attitudes from other users. The spread of this kind of hate can lead to a more hostile online environment and worsen the situation for all parties involved.

Hiring the elderly to be the subject of online begging in the form of exploitation and violation of human rights, using Hiring the elderly for online begging is a form of exploitation and violation of human rights (Akbar, 2020). The elderly should be given proper protection and care, not used as objects to make money unethically. Furthermore, the inhibition of positive social change, just as hiring the elderly to beg online does not encourage positive social change in overcoming the issue of poverty or elderly welfare. On the contrary, this only worsens the situation and ignores the efforts that should be made to improve the quality of life of the elderly.

Spreading negative images about the elderly: Hiring the elderly to beg online through TikTok can reinforce negative stereotypes about the elderly as a group that is weak and needs help (Yusdiyanto et al., 2020). This contributes to discrimination and oppression of the elderly in society.

Threatening the health of the elderly as talents of mud bath content can cause stress and discomfort in the elderly, mud bath activities that may involve difficult or uncomfortable movements can cause physical and emotional stress in the elderly (Arifiati & Wahyuni, 2019). This can worsen their overall health condition, including high blood pressure, sleep disturbances, or an increased risk of heart problems. The following impact will appear in the form of infections and skin diseases. The water used in mud baths may contain microorganisms or bacteria that can potentially cause infections or skin diseases. Elderly skin is generally thinner, drier, and prone to health problems. Excessive or uncontrolled exposure to mud can worsen their skin condition or cause new problems.

2. Hurting Human Values

Not all content creators use good, safe, and creative ways when acting on social media. Most content creators are willing to do anything, even torture and humiliate themselves, to get impressions or follow challenges from the audience (Lesmono et al., 2021). This is in line with the views of Sociologist from Udayana University, Wahyu Budi Nugroho, who said that although these online beggars do not consider their actions as a problem, this is a degradation of human values and reduces human dignity and dignity (Sihombing, 2023).

The exploitation of the elderly by TikTok content creators who encourage sexual activity and humiliation online has resulted in negative consequences for society. Online begging trends, including extreme content such as mud baths, are increasingly rife on social media platforms such as TikTok (Princess, 2023). These creators produce content that exploits the poor and elderly for financial gain while encouraging their audience to participate in such behavior (Defianti, 2023).

The impact on the elderly who carry out online begging activities can result in a loss of dignity and self-esteem and risk being used by those who want to exploit them. On the other hand, if the action continues to be done by soaking the body in a puddle of mud water for a long time, it will affect the health of the elderly and in the future make the mental figure beg

because only by doing the action of soaking and bathing in mud water can make money quickly.

How to Overcome the Rampant Phenomenon of Online Begging on Tiktok

The trend of online begging by exploiting the elderly must be stopped immediately to prevent the proliferation of accounts that imitate such behavior. One way to overcome this problem is to educate social media users not to support exploiting vulnerable individuals for personal gain through the TikTok platform (Putra, 2023). Refraining from watching live broadcasts and not donating to such accounts is one of the most effective ways to end live actions that are not educational or break the rules. This can be a preventive measure for content creators intending to exploit the elderly.

Advice for TikTok Media

The government does not need to regulate this activity specifically but must take action to prevent the public from supporting the content of the elderly begging online by giving gifts or donations (Putra, 2023). As the authorized institution overseeing social media applications in Indonesia, the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kominfo) is expected to monitor the flow of information in the community. If the content circulating on social media is considered inappropriate for dissemination, Kominfo has the right to block the account that broadcasts the content. As we know, social media users and viewers are not only adults but also minors.

Some suggestions for TikTok media to be able to provide live policies that prevent the phenomenon of online ngemis by Carrying out strict policy enforcement; TikTok needs to have a clear and firm policy regarding fundraising or requests for financial assistance on the platform (Dini et al. et al., 2017). The policy should prohibit users from directly asking for money or gifts through live streams. Next to detection algorithms and reports, TikTok should develop sophisticated algorithms to detect content related to online beggars. The algorithm can identify keywords or phrases used in live broadcasts, such as requests for money or financial support.

Another suggestion is that TikTok can invite active users to report suspicious content or violate policies by involving users (Arraafi, M. A., & Zulhazmi, 2022). In addition, TikTok can also involve the user community in providing input and suggestions related to this issue. Then, TikTok can take educative steps by providing users with clear information about the risks and consequences of online begging. This can be done through notification messages or online resources that the user can access.

Further input can be made by collaborating with charities; TikTok can establish partnerships with trusted charities to help users who need financial assistance or other support (Akshah, C., & Yuliar, 2022). This can direct users who want to help to legitimate charities and reduce the incentive to beg online on TikTok. Finally, TikTok needs to conduct regular evaluations of policies and actions taken to prevent the phenomenon of online games. By monitoring it continuously, TikTok can identify new gaps or trends that may emerge and take the necessary steps to address them.

CONCLUSION AND REKOMENDATION

Based on the results and discussion above, it can be concluded that the Commodification of the Elderly in Tiktok Live Streaming that the phenomenon of exploitation of the elderly has a negative impact, among others: violating legal norms in society and Hurting human values. Some of the factors that cause the elderly to become online begging talents are: to attract attention and earn money, then the easy access to the internet and social media expands the narrative that can be conveyed by beggars, after that most social media offers better opportunities for online beggar content, besides that it gets a lot of netizens' attention because of the sensation created, then for reasons of boredom make the majority of people have free time that is used to be more active in complaining on social media, including in terms of begging online, then netizens' empathy becomes the main factor in viral online begging content, finally taking advantage of the gap in the saweran feature on social media, especially Tiktok.

The preventive steps to overcome the rampant phenomenon of online begging on Tiktok are: refrain from watching live broadcasts and not donating to accounts that make online begging content, then to the authorized institution, namely Kominfo should be firmer to block accounts that broadcast online begging content, then to Tiktok media in order to provide live policies that prevent the phenomenon of online begging by enforcing policies that strict and firm.

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations, so further research needs to be carried out regarding the topic of Commodification of the Elderly in TikTok Live Streaming in order to perfect this research and increase readers' insight.

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