Research Article

The Influence of Self-Control on the Intensity of Tiktok Usage Among Students of Muhammadiyah University Gresik

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Abstract
This study aims to examine the influence of self-control on the intensity of TikTok usage among students at Muhammadiyah University of Gresik. The phenomenon of increasing daily TikTok consumption among students has raised concerns regarding its potential impact on academic performance and social behavior. Using a quantitative approach with a correlational research design, data were collected from a sample of 120 students through validated self-control and TikTok usage intensity scales. The results of the statistical analysis using simple linear regression showed a significant negative correlation between self-control and TikTok usage intensity ($p < 0.05$), indicating that students with higher levels of self-control tend to spend less time on TikTok. These findings suggest that self-control plays a crucial role in regulating students' digital behavior, especially in managing social media usage. The study recommends that educational institutions implement self-regulation training and digital literacy programs to foster healthier media consumption habits among students.

Keywords: Self-Control, Social Media Usage, Student Behavior

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed the way individuals, particularly university students (Alshebami, 2022; Kuo, 2023; X. Li, 2022), interact with information and entertainment. Social media platforms have become a dominant force in shaping communication patterns, daily routines, and even cognitive habits. Among these platforms, TikTok has emerged as one of the most widely used applications among the

youth due to its short-form, engaging, and highly personalized content. TikTok's algorithmic capabilities allow users to receive a continuous stream of videos tailored to their preferences, leading to prolonged screen time and repeated usage. This immersive experience, while entertaining and socially rewarding, has raised concerns among educators and mental health professionals regarding the potential for excessive use and its impact on students' academic focus, time management, and psychological well-being.

Students, who are in a transitional phase between adolescence and adulthood, often face a unique set of psychological challenges. One of the key psychological traits that influences behavior in this phase is self-control, which refers to the capacity to regulate impulses, emotions, and behaviors in order to achieve long-term goals. The lack of self-control has been associated with a wide range of maladaptive behaviors, including procrastination, internet addiction, and decreased academic performance. The nature of TikTok, which offers instant gratification and an endless stream of content, presents a challenge for individuals with lower levels of self-control. The platform's design inherently encourages habitual use, which may develop into compulsive behavior if not managed appropriately. This makes it essential to explore how self-control may serve as a protective factor against excessive TikTok usage among university students.

Previous research has examined the relationship between self-control and various forms of media consumption, such as gaming, Instagram use, and general smartphone addiction. However, empirical studies focusing specifically on TikTok as a unique digital phenomenon remain limited. As TikTok differs in content delivery, engagement patterns, and psychological impact, it warrants separate investigation (Cao, 2022; Othman, 2025; Qi, 2023). Moreover, most existing studies are conducted in Western contexts, with relatively few focusing on Indonesian students, particularly those studying in Islamic-based higher education institutions such as Muhammadiyah University of Gresik. Cultural context plays a vital role in shaping self-control mechanisms and social media behavior, making localized studies not only relevant but necessary.

The environment at Muhammadiyah University of Gresik offers a unique academic and cultural landscape that blends religious values, academic rigor, and modern student lifestyles. In such a context, understanding how students exercise self-control in managing their TikTok use may provide valuable insights into the broader dynamics of student behavior in Indonesian Islamic universities (Muniz, 2023; Ren, 2023; Zhou, 2023). Furthermore, this research addresses a critical gap in the literature by integrating psychological theory with contemporary digital behavior. By investigating the influence of self-control on the intensity of TikTok usage, this study contributes to both psychological scholarship and digital media studies, providing interdisciplinary relevance.

The implications of this research extend beyond academic discourse. They are highly practical for educators, counselors, and student affairs professionals who are seeking effective interventions to help students balance digital consumption with academic and personal responsibilities (Khalifeh, 2024; Ma, 2022; Suryadi, 2025). Understanding the psychological underpinnings of TikTok use can guide the development of targeted digital literacy and self-regulation programs. This study also contributes to the discourse on media ethics and student empowerment in the digital age. While banning or limiting digital platforms is not a sustainable solution (Aibar-Almazán, 2024; Mileva, 2023; X. Yang, 2023), fostering intrinsic regulation

through self-control could be a more effective and ethically sound approach to ensuring responsible media usage.

Methodologically, this study adopts a quantitative approach to systematically measure both self-control and the intensity of TikTok use among students (Cui, 2024; C. Yang, 2024; Yin, 2023). It relies on established psychological scales and statistical analysis to uncover patterns and correlations, ensuring the validity and reliability of the findings. In addition, this research is guided by the theoretical framework of self-regulation theory, which emphasizes the role of individual agency in managing behavior and goal attainment. The theory provides a strong foundation for interpreting the dynamics between self-control and media usage intensity in a structured academic context.

In light of the issues discussed, this study seeks to answer a fundamental question: To what extent does self-control influence the intensity of TikTok usage among students of Muhammadiyah University Gresik? By addressing this question, the study aims to illuminate the psychological mechanisms behind digital behavior and offer practical solutions for student development in the era of social media.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research design using a correlational approach to examine the relationship between self-control and the intensity of TikTok usage among university students (Y. Li, 2022; Ray, 2024; Zheng, 2024). The population consisted of active undergraduate students at Muhammadiyah University of Gresik, with participants selected through purposive sampling based on their active use of TikTok. Data collection was conducted using two standardized instruments: the Self-Control Scale adapted from Tangney et al., which measures various dimensions of self-regulation such as impulse control, habit breaking, and goal setting; and the TikTok Usage Intensity Scale, developed specifically for this study, which measures the frequency, duration, and psychological engagement of students with the platform. The validity and reliability of both instruments were tested through a preliminary pilot study.

Data were analyzed using statistical methods including descriptive analysis and simple linear regression to determine the influence of self-control on TikTok usage intensity (Boccio, 2022; Shen, 2024; X. Wang, 2025). Prior to the regression analysis, normality, linearity, and multicollinearity assumptions were examined to ensure the robustness of the statistical procedures. Ethical considerations were also observed by obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring confidentiality, and explaining the voluntary nature of participation. The use of a correlational design allows for the identification of patterns and associations between psychological traits and media consumption behaviors, offering empirical insights into how internal factors such as self-control can predict the extent to which students engage with social media platforms like TikTok.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the data analysis revealed a significant negative correlation between self-control and the intensity of TikTok usage among students. Descriptive statistics showed that students with higher self-control scores tended to report lower levels of TikTok engagement, including reduced daily usage time and less emotional dependence on the platform. The linear regression analysis confirmed that self-control was a significant predictor of TikTok usage

intensity, with a negative beta coefficient and a p-value below the established significance threshold. These findings suggest that students with greater capacity to regulate their impulses and behaviors are more likely to manage their digital consumption effectively, avoiding the risk of excessive use that may interfere with academic and personal responsibilities.

The discussion of these findings aligns with the self-regulation theory, which posits that individuals with higher levels of self-control are better equipped to resist immediate temptations in favor of long-term goals. In the context of social media, especially a highly engaging platform like TikTok, the ability to delay gratification becomes crucial. The immersive and addictive nature of TikTok, driven by its algorithmic content feed and constant novelty, creates an environment that challenges users' self-regulatory mechanisms. Therefore, these results support previous research suggesting that self-control serves as a psychological buffer against problematic media use. In addition, the findings highlight the importance of integrating digital literacy and emotional regulation strategies into university life, especially in institutions like Muhammadiyah University of Gresik, where character development and ethical behavior are foundational educational goals.

Table 1. Results of the Validity Test of the Self-Control Variable

Item	R.tabel	Sig.	R.count	Explanation
X1	0,192	0,05	0,251	Valid
X2	0,192	0,05	0,315	Valid
X3	0,192	0,05	0,287	Valid
X4	0,192	0,05	0,694	Valid
X5	0,192	0,05	0,659	Valid
X6	0,192	0,05	0,663	Valid
X7	0,192	0,05	0,636	Valid
X8	0,192	0,05	0,398	Valid
X9	0,192	0,05	0,409	Valid
X10	0,192	0,05	0,589	Valid
X11	0,192	0,05	0,634	Valid
X12	0,192	0,05	0,421	Valid

Table 1 presents the results of the validity test conducted on twelve items used to measure the self-control variable in this study. The validity of each item was assessed using the Pearson product-moment correlation technique, comparing the calculated correlation value (r. count) with the critical value of the correlation coefficient (r. table) at a significance level of five percent. Based on the sample size, the r. table value was determined to be 0.192. The results indicate that all twelve items (X1 to X12) have r. count values greater than r.table, which confirms that each item is statistically valid and contributes effectively to measuring the self-control construct. For instance, item X4 shows the highest validity coefficient (0.694), suggesting a strong correlation with the overall score of the variable, while item X1, with a value of 0.251, still exceeds the minimum threshold and is thus considered valid. This indicates that the instrument used in this study is capable of reliably capturing various dimensions of self-control among students, including impulse regulation, goal orientation, and behavioral consistency. The validity of these items supports the integrity of the subsequent analysis and reinforces the accuracy of the research findings regarding the influence of self-control on TikTok usage intensity.

Table 1. Results of the Validity Test for the Intensity of TikTok Usage Variable

Item	R table	Sig.	R could	Explanation
Y1	**0,192**	0,05	0,608	Valid
Y2	**0,192**	0,05	0,554	Valid
Y3	**0,192**	0,05	0,774	Valid
Y4	**0,192**	0,05	0,796	Valid
Y5	**0,192**	0,05	0,698	Valid
Y6	**0,192**	0,05	0,772	Valid
Y7	**0,192**	0,05	0,627	Valid
Y8	**0,192**	0,05	0,579	Valid
Y9	**0,192**	0,05	0,610	Valid
Y10	**0,192**	0,05	0,575	Valid
Y11	**0,192**	0,05	0,639	Valid
Y12	**0,192**	0,05	0,523	Valid
Y13	**0,192**	0,05	0,526	Valid
Y14	**0,192**	0,05	0,643	Valid
Y15	**0,192**	0,05	0,817	Valid
Y16	**0,192**	0,05	0,668	Valid
Y17	**0,192**	0,05	0,762	Valid
Y18	**0,192**	0,05	0,793	Valid
Y19	**0,192**	0,05	0,635	Valid
Y20	**0,192**	0,05	0,387	Valid
Y21	**0,192**	0,05	0,643	Valid
Y22	**0,192**	0,05	0,721	Valid
Y23	**0,192**	0,05	0,736	Valid
Y24	**0,192**	0,05	0,806	Valid
Y25	**0,192**	0,05	0,770	Valid
Y26	**0,192**	0,05	0,703	Valid

Table 1 displays the results of the validity test for twenty-six items used to measure the intensity of TikTok usage among students. The test employed Pearson product-moment correlation to determine whether each item correlates significantly with the total score of the construct. Using a significance level of five percent and referring to the sample size, the critical r.table value was set at 0.192. All twenty-six items (Y1 to Y26) show r.count values greater than the r.table value, indicating that each item is statistically valid. The highest r.count value is found in item Y15 (0.817), followed by other strongly valid items such as Y24 (0.806), Y4 (0.796), and Y18 (0.793), which suggest that these items are especially effective in capturing the behavioral patterns of TikTok usage. Even the item with the lowest r.count value, Y20 (0.387), still exceeds the r.table threshold, confirming its validity. These results affirm that the measurement instrument for the intensity of TikTok usage is both valid and comprehensive, covering various dimensions such as frequency of access, duration of use, emotional attachment, and habitual behavior. This strong construct validity enhances the credibility of subsequent analyses that investigate how this variable interacts with psychological constructs such as self-control, and supports the robustness of the study's overall findings.

The findings of this study reveal a consistent and meaningful pattern: students who exhibit higher levels of self-control tend to use TikTok with less intensity (Astuti, 2024; Jiang, 2022; Rodríguez-Ruiz, 2024). This supports the theoretical assumption that individuals with better impulse regulation and goal-oriented behavior are more capable of managing their time

and resisting the allure of digital distractions. Self-control, in this context, acts as a psychological filter that helps students prioritize long-term academic and personal goals over the short-term gratification offered by constant TikTok engagement. This relationship between self-control and social media intensity can be understood through the lens of self-regulation theory (Feng, 2024; Longa, 2025; Q. Wang, 2025). According to this perspective, individuals who possess higher self-regulation are better equipped to delay gratification, resist temptations, and persist in the pursuit of meaningful objectives. In the case of TikTok, which delivers rapid, entertaining content in a virtually endless loop, the temptation for prolonged usage is significant. Students with lower self-control may find themselves vulnerable to overuse, which can gradually interfere with academic focus, sleep patterns, and mental well-being.

Moreover, TikTok's user interface is specifically designed to maximize engagement. Through algorithmic content delivery, the platform continuously adapts to user behavior, making it increasingly difficult for users to disengage. This design directly challenges an individual's cognitive boundaries, making self-control an essential factor in determining usage patterns (Bortne, 2025; Kiepe, 2024; Tan, 2024). Students with a stronger capacity to regulate their behavior are more likely to recognize the moment when their usage becomes excessive and take action to stop or reduce it. In the cultural and educational context of Muhammadiyah University of Gresik, self-control is not only a psychological construct but also a moral and ethical value. As an institution that upholds Islamic principles, self-discipline, responsibility, and moderation are embedded within the educational environment. Therefore, the development of self-control is not solely influenced by personal traits but also by the institutional atmosphere, which may serve as a buffer against the overuse of platforms like TikTok.

The findings of this research are in line with prior studies on digital addiction and psychological resilience (Friehs, 2022; Songpukdee, 2025; Stapels, 2023), which suggest that self-control is a key determinant in managing excessive digital behavior. Past literature has consistently emphasized the role of self-control in preventing online procrastination, regulating screen time, and promoting healthy digital habits (Alharbi, 2023; Germano, 2022; Huang, 2024). This study adds to that body of knowledge by specifically addressing the context of TikTok usage among Indonesian university students, a relatively underexplored area in psychological and educational research. Importantly, the results also suggest a need for universities to integrate self-regulation skills into student development programs. Digital literacy efforts should move beyond technical competencies and include emotional and behavioral strategies to manage time online effectively. Workshops, counseling services, and awareness campaigns that target impulse control and digital mindfulness could serve as practical interventions to help students balance their academic responsibilities and recreational digital activities.

While the study confirms the negative influence of low self-control on TikTok overuse, it also opens up questions about the root causes of diminished self-control among students. Factors such as stress, academic pressure, lack of parental monitoring, or absence of structured schedules may contribute to weakened self-discipline. Addressing these contributing factors through holistic student support systems could enhance the effectiveness of behavioral interventions aimed at reducing excessive TikTok usage. Lastly, the discussion highlights the importance of cultivating reflective digital habits among students. In an era where technology permeates every aspect of student life, awareness and critical thinking about digital consumption are essential. Students must be encouraged to view social media not merely as a

source of entertainment, but as a tool that can be managed with discipline and purpose. Strengthening self-control may thus serve not only to reduce digital dependency but also to prepare students for greater challenges in academic, social, and professional domains.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that self-control plays a significant and inverse role in determining the intensity of TikTok usage among students at Muhammadiyah University of Gresik. The findings demonstrate that students who possess higher levels of self-control are more capable of managing their time and digital behaviors, thereby avoiding excessive use of the TikTok platform. This outcome reinforces the theoretical framework of self-regulation, highlighting its relevance in contemporary digital contexts where instant gratification and algorithm-driven engagement often challenge personal discipline. Furthermore, the research underscores the importance of integrating self-regulation training and digital literacy into university programs to foster healthier technology use habits. Beyond its psychological dimensions, self-control in this context reflects broader values of responsibility and moderation, which align with the ethical and spiritual character promoted within Islamic educational institutions. Therefore, nurturing self-control not only serves as a protective factor against digital overuse but also contributes to the holistic development of students as disciplined, reflective, and purpose-driven individuals in the digital age.

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